



MONASH University

The Identity and the Dilemma of the Malay Music-Culture of the Urang Pulo Islanders of the Banyak Archipelago, Sumatra: An Ethnographic, Socio-Historical and Music-Analytical Study

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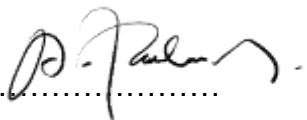
Abstract

This thesis investigates the music-cultural identity and conservational dilemma of the hitherto un-researched music-culture of the Islanders (Urang Pulo) of the Banyak Archipelago in Aceh-Singkil Regency off the west coast of Aceh, Indonesia. The Islanders' dominant concept of identity is coloured by their dominant *sikambang* music, dance and legend, history of cultural contact with west-coastal Sumatran Malay and offshore island area, Niasan and Simeulue immigration to the Islands, the cultural memory of their former court centre at Haloban, the Islanders' peripheral contact with the Dutch colonial power, and their typically Malay *kacokan* tendency to combine selective elements of cultures with which they have been in sustained contact. The people's traditional customs (*adat istiadat*) and Animist-Muslim worldview shine through their vocal and instrumental music, dances, and bardic story-telling genres at weddings, circumcisions and in daily routine. The thesis' original contributions to the discipline of ethnomusicology primarily lie in the areas of music-cultural identity, identity and place, vocal quality, culture contact, musical symbols of pre-colonial Malay kingdoms, gender, emotional expression in performance, and music revitalisation theory in recent modernising times. To begin to solve the conservation dilemma, the whole west-coastal population of Sumatra needs to be mobilised to fight for the area's economic development partly through revitalising their rich *sikambang* heritage. This is important not only to save the art forms from extinction and expose them to the world but also for the maintenance of the local people's sense of identity and self-confidence.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:



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Date: 24 November 2016

*"Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can."*

– John Wesley

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Orthography

One of the challenges in a thesis that aims to present research on Indonesia as a whole is the many spellings of words in regional and Indian/Sanskrit-derived languages and the Indonesianised versions of transliterated Sanskrit and Arabic words, which are often inconsistent. I have unified spellings of most Arabic core terms, such as “Qur'an”, throughout the thesis. However alternate spellings of some terms, such as *pendendang* in Bahasa Haloban and *padendang* on Sumatra's west coast for “solo vocalist”, appear to represent local practice. Most non-English terms are given in a speech variety of Malay, Acehnese or Latinised Arabic, with an appropriate abbreviation in parenthesis. In the Indonesian language spellings conform with the official system established in 1972. Words and names in use before the new spelling was introduced are given in the old spelling, for example, dj and tj (old spelling) are rendered j and c respectively (new spelling).

Abbreviations

Speech Varieties and Languages

Ar.	- Arabic
BA	- Bahasa Aceh
BD	- Bahasa Devayan, spoken in Simeulue
BH	- Bahasa Haloban
BI	- Bahasa Indonesia
BJP	- Bahasa Jamu Pulo, a speech variety of Malay/Melayu
BL	- Bahasa Lingbano, former name for Bahasa Haloban
BMe	- Bahasa Melayu, Malay
BMi	- Bahasa Minangkabau
BN	- Bahasa Nias, Bahasa Ono Niha
BPB	- Bahasa Jamu Pasisir Barat, a speech variety of Malay/Melayu
D	- Dutch
G	- German

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Glossary

Adat	: Local complexes of norms and traditions
Adok	: literally, <i>adat</i> (traditional customs)
Ayunan	: sling suspended from the ceiling
Biola	: violin
Buai	: lullaby
Bupati	: Regent
Camat	: District Head
Dendang	: song
Desa	: village
Gandang	: frame drum
Kabupaten	: regency
Kapal Cepat	: speed boat
Kapal Feri	: ferry
Kapal Nelayan	: fishermens' boat
Kecamatan	: district
Kepala Desa	: the Head of a Village
Kepulauan	: archipelago
Kota	: city
Pulau	: island
Robin	: traditional boat
Selendang	: long scarf
Sekolah Dasar	: Primary School
Walikota	: Mayor

Family terms in Jamu Pulo Language

Membo	: <i>Cucu</i> , grandchild
Anak	: <i>Anak</i> , son
Anak Anak	: Children
Perempuan	: <i>Silawe</i> , woman
Laki Laki	: <i>Sihale</i> , man
Emak	: <i>Ibu</i> , mother
Apak	: <i>Bapak</i> , father
Aki'u	: <i>Adik Sepupu</i> , younger nephew
Kakak	: <i>Kakak Sepupu</i> , elder nephew
Mamak	: <i>Paman</i> , uncle
Etek	: <i>Bibi</i> , aunty
Nenek	: <i>Neneh</i> , grandmother
Andung	: <i>Kakek</i> , grandfather
Unyang	: <i>Bapak/Ibu dari Kakek/Nenek</i> , Grandparents of a grandmother or grandfather
Udo	: <i>Kakek/Nenek dari Kakek/Nenek</i> Grandparent of a grandparent

Musical Terms:

- Free or Additive Rhythm : rhythm in which time values of notes and rests can freely be added to or subtracted from a musical line by the performer; rhythm in which time-lengths cannot be divided into regular bar lengths and are not limited by the need to fit into a regular pulsation
- Glide, glissando : ascending or descending gliding movement from one pitch to another without break of sound
- Level Shift : a numerical designation of the degree of a melody's ascent or descent
- Melisma : at least two tones sung to one syllable of a given text
- Melodic Formula : tone pattern continually recurring within a melodic line or at cadential points, thus established as being typical of a style
- Ornamentation : melisma and incidental melodic decoration, *bunga-bunga*
- Pitch Level : the actual pitch of a tone in performance.
- Tone Prominence : an estimation of the relative prominence of each tone of a melos according to the tone's frequency of occurrence, its number of appearances as final tone of lines and as the initial, final, highest, and/or lowest tone of song, its relative time-length and its occurrence in repeated tone passages
- Tone Repetition : successive repeated tones of the same pitch
- Tone System : the totality of tonal relationship in a given tonal material
- Variability : the incidence or rhythmic, intonational, melodic, and ornamental differences between performances of the one composition
- Vocal Style : sum total of recurrent characteristics in the vocal performance of an individual, or common characteristics in the vocal performances of singers of a geographical area

Prologue

This project began as an ethnomusicological field trip in June 2010 as I accompanied Professor Margaret Kartomi on her journey to the Kepulauan Banyak (Banyak Archipelago) via the capital city of Singkil in Aceh-Singkil Province on the mainland of Sumatra as part of the final preparations for her monumental book titled *Musical Journeys in Sumatra* published in 2012.¹ Eventually I obtained an Indonesian scholarship to carry out my own field trips in the islands and write this thesis on their traditional musical arts and performances – of songs, dances, instrumental music, and bardic story-telling, which I viewed in their ceremonial contexts, especially at weddings, circumcisions, and on ordinary occasions in their daily life.

My first impressions from the air in 2010 before landing at Singkil's Syech Hamzah Fanshuri airport, which only services small nine-seater aircrafts, was that the province had succeeded in creating only a modest level of infrastructure on the mainland and I wondered whether the same would apply in the banyak archipelago. On the 50-minutes' drive to downtown Singkil, I noted that the villages were underprivileged compared to villages near my hometown Banda Aceh and other cities of Aceh Province such as Pidie, Bireun, Lhokseumawe and Langsa. The people's houses were separated by grassy meadows and trees with considerable wild undergrowth. On entering the city, I saw more varied quality houses, schools, shops and government offices, but I felt anxious about the apparent living standards of the majority and the comparative lack of development there.

¹ Margaret Joy Kartomi, AM FAHA Dr Phil., who is Professor Ethnomusicology at Monash University has pioneered research into Sumatra's music-culture, including Aceh's, since the 1970s. I requested permission to undertake the trip with her from my employer, Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh where I have worked as Lecturer-in-Charge of Music Studies in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Science Education from 2002 to the present.

In the city of Singkil, Margaret and I met first with the Bupati (Regent) of the regency, the late Mr Makmur Syahputra, in the Kantor Bupati (the Regent's office building). He briefly described the situation in Singkil to us, stressing that it was a newly-born regency that lagged behind other regencies in economic growth, human resources and government networking. He said his regency had become less productive because of the common belief of outsiders that the people in Singkil still practice black magic and are backward.² I had also heard this rumour at times in Banda Aceh. He said he wanted to develop tourism, pointing to the panoramic view of Singkil's seaside and the offshore islands of Kepulauan Banyak in the Indian Ocean.

After our meeting with the Bupati, we embarked on our journey to Pulau Balai, one of the islands in Kepulauan Banyak. It took almost two hours by speedboat (*kapal cepat*). The regular public ferry (*kapal feri*) runs once a week to the island, taking about four hours, while local fishermen's boats (*kapal ikan*) take about four and a half hours and are scheduled almost every day. In Pulau Balai [Balai Island] there are three Desa or Gampong/Kampung [village], including Pulau Balai village, as part of Kecamatan (district) Pulau Banyak, and two other villages, Teluk Nibung village and Pulau Baguk village. It should be noted that Pulau Balai village and Pulau Baguk village are located on the same island - Pulau Balai, while Teluk Nibung village is located on Pulau Ujung Batu, about twenty minutes crossing the sea by a *robin*, a small traditional boat.

Our arrival had been planned to coincide with the first ever Green Turtle Festival at Pulau Balai village, one of six villages in Kepulauan Banyak. It was organized by the *Yayasan Pulau Banyak* (Pulau Banyak Foundation), a local non-governmental organisation focusing on the sea turtle monitoring program as part of the campaign for the long-term conservation of the green turtle, an endangered species that is mainly found in Pulau Bangkaru, one of the 99

² This short meeting with the Aceh Singkil's Bupati, Bp Makmur Syahputra was held on 16 June, 2010 at the Kantor Bupati Kabupaten Singkil, Aceh Province

registered islands in Kepulauan Banyak.³ The Festival organisers asked the Kepulauan Banyak people, the Urang Pulo, to enter four competitions belonging to the so-called “local traditions” of arts and sports. Local sports include fishing, kite-flying, cooking and weaving, plus *takraw* - a local game using a basket as a ball kicked over a net. There was also paddling traditional canoes, kayaking, swimming, and free diving. The arts included photography, poetry writing, storytelling and music-dance.⁴

My first opportunity to record a performance in Kepulauan Banyak was on the Festival stage from 9pm-11pm on June 16, 2010. It exemplified a trend in Indonesia to involve large numbers of performers in a “colossal” event. I recorded the most important of the traditional dances called *adok* performed by more than thirty male and female students from Pulau Balai village’s Junior High School (Sekolah Menengah Pertama, SMP), all of whom were dressed in elaborate local costumes. Two *gandang* (frame drum) players doubled as *pendendang* (solo vocalists) singers of appropriate verses in local *pantun* (quatrains comprising pairs of rhyming couplets) (see Figure a).



³ This information was supplied in my interview on 16 June 2010 with Muhammad Studi, a Singkil-born storyteller and member of the organizing committee for the Festival.

⁴ The Festival program was advertised in *Suara Pulau*, the Newsletter of the Banyak Archipelago Foundation (Yayasan Pulau Banyak), available online at <http://www.acehturtlepulau-banyakonline/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Newsletter_YPB_March2011.pdf>. I downloaded this site on December 21, 2012.

Figure a: The *adok* performance which I recorded and photographed at the Green Penyu Festival in Pulau Balai town, Pulau Balai, Pulau Banyak District, Banyak Archipelago on June 16, 2010. The *pendendang* as well as the *gandang* player is shown on the left and the student dancers on the right.

After this special performance of the *adok* dance, we sailed next morning in a small canoe to Teluk Nibung, a village in Pulau Ujung Batu (Ujung Batu island) about a half an hour away to the north of Pulau Balai village. The local artists and administrators were expecting us, having been informed in advance of our coming to record and video their performances. We were taken to see a performance by six couples of adolescent boys and girls enrolled in the final year at Teluk Nibung Primary School. They wore beautiful Malay costumes - with the boys wearing a longsleeve white shirt, a long yellow triangle head, and a wrap-around gold-threaded sarong (*kain songket*), and the girls wearing a *teluk belanga* (satin trouser suit) with sets of antique jewelry on their hair buns, and a shiny long scarf (*slendang*) across one shoulder. The boys and girls performed the *Pulau Pinang* dance to a backdrop of trees in the schoolyard of the Teluk Nibung Primary School, accompanied by an elderly pair of musicians, They were a *biola* (violin) player who improvised an ornamented melodic line on a *biola*, which is actually a violin but not played in the european classical violin technique, and a *gandang* (medium-sized frame drum) player. The dance is also known as the *payung* (umbrella) dance, because each male dancer shields his female partner with an umbrella, which is a courting symbol (see **Figure b**). I also recorded a pair of male master dancer-teachers performing the same couples dance and Bp Armansyah and Bp Tarmizi performing an excerpt of bardic story telling called *talibun*.

In a nearby family home, a mother named Ibu Eriani was singing lullabies to her baby in a sling suspended from the ceiling. She called the lullabies *buai*, which literally means “sway”. As she

sang she swayed (*mengayun*) the baby in the sling (*ayunan*) and sang the songs (*babuai*) until the baby was asleep. I recorded two lullabies there.



Figure b: The *Tari Payung* Performance at the Teluk Nibung Primary School, Desa Teluk Nibung, Pulau Ujung Batu, Pulau Banyak District, Banyak Archipelago on June 17, 2010. A *pendendang* and *gandang* player and a second *gandang* player (left) accompanied the student dancers (right).

Thus, my first impressions of the Urang Pulo were formulated in this, my first field trip. In search of other Urang Pulo performance forms and performers, we then embarked on a two-hour sea journey to Haloban and Asantola villages in the Pulau Banyak Barat district on the largest island in the archipelago, named Pulau Tuangku (“My Lord Island”).

On reaching the village of Haloban in the Pulau Banyak Barat district, the *camat* (district head), Mr. Hasbi, and his cultural advisers told us that artists from Asantola village on the island would join the *pendendang*, the singer-dancer, living in Haloban that night for song-dance performances from about 9.00pm until 11.00am, and that we could photograph, video, and audio-record them. The event was timed to allow agricultural workers and fisher-folk to return home from the field or from the sea as the case may be, and to wash, pray, eat and momentarily rest before the performance.

The event turned out to be remarkable in that members of the whole village, ranging from small children to the elderly, assembled and enjoyed the performances to the end. Then around twenty female members of a re-established *nasyid*⁵ group, named the *Nasyid Group of Pulau Tuangku*, appeared and told us they could present three songs the *nasyid* genre, i.e. popular songs with mainly Muslim religious texts and their own group frame drum accompaniment. However, on this occasion they chose to present *qasidah* songs, another genre of solo and choral songs with devotional Muslim and secular texts, some of which were in the Indonesian language and others in the local Haloban speech variety.

After the village women's performance, around forty men from three nearby villages performed, with the audience crowding together in front of one of the villagers' family home. They performed in front of a decorative cloth backdrop weddings and circumcisions. In all, they performed short versions of seven traditional song-dances, accompanied by a *pendendang*, a *biola* player, and dozens of *gandang* players. Finally, the Head Secretary of the Pulau Banyak Barat District, Bp Rudi Faisal, made a speech. As he himself had never seen such a performance as this, he urged the villagers to keep the traditional arts alive according to the wishes of the ancestors, and to make the young people of the area and outsiders aware of Haloban's magnificent artistic traditions.

Three years later in 2013, as a Ph.D. student at Monash University, I continued my ethnomusicological field work on the second of my four field trips, and despite changes in the political leadership in the Banyak Archipelago at all three levels - the district, sub-district and village, I obtained much new data on the communities and their artistic activities, especially on the traditional village cultures of Haloban and Asantola villages on Pulau Tuangku. Most recordings I made were of individual and group interviews and performances. My informants

⁵ *Nasyid*, an Arabic word for group chanting, either with or without instrumental accompaniment.

also offered me more stories of the ‘origin’ of the Urang Pulo (Islanders), the legend that lies behind their musical arts. They also explained some technical terms relevant to the performances. Fortunately, I was able to make a video of another version of the *buai* lullaby sung by a female elder in Haloban village on Pulau Tuangku which differed substantially from the one I had recorded in Teluk Nibung village on Pulau Ujung Batu in 2010. I also obtained a set of DVDs of a five-day circumcision ceremony held village in 2007 in Haloban, which I have analyseed bellow.

On my third field trip to Kepulauan Banyak for two months in 2014, I not only recorded throughout Kepulauan Banyak but also along the west coast of Sumatra. I aimed to obtain information on the history of mainland Sumatra-Islander relationships. I discovered, the historical interactions between the two areas have partly been due to the Islanders’ intermarriages over the centuries with brides from families in Nias and Simeulue islands and the mainland towns of Singkil, Barus and Sibolga, and partly do to the Islanders’ migrations to and from the west coast of Sumatra and Nias and Simeulue islands.

It was also necessary to seek out data on the history of the Islanders’ relationships with communities on the neighbouring islands of Nias and Simeulue. Fortunately, my main interlocutor in Haloban, Bp Anhar Sitanggang, was able to accompany me on this surprising journey. We first stayed for a couple of days in Singkil where we met several *pendendang* and members of the royal family of the former Singkil Kingdom, as well as a descendant of the Tuangku Kingdom of Haloban, and some government officials. Then we met several elders and *pendendang* in the west-coast towns of Barus, Pasir Tarandam, Sibolga and also visited Nias. After returning from Nias to Sibolga, we continued our journey to Padang Panjang and met a descendant of the former royal Pagaruyung kingdom in Bukit Tinggi. After we visited Pariaman we continued to Tiku on the north-west coast of West Sumatra. On our way back to

Singkil, we visited Natal and Jago Jago, and then Sibolga, after which we met the elders and *pendendang* in Botot and Barus and finally reached Singkil. Bp Anhar Sitanggang returned to his home at Haloban while I headed for Banda Aceh via Medan.

This trip enabled me to document and learn about the background and significance of Kepulauan Banyak's musical genres, song texts and styles. I also obtained data to help me reconstruct the history of the Tuangku Kingdom on Tuangku Island, given that it has its existence unknown to professional historians. I was able to consult local oral historians and other cultural leaders in the Islands as well as in west-coastal Sumatran towns, and in Nias, North Sumatra, and Pagaruyung in West Sumatra. I was able to record several versions of these oral histories in the field as well as to audio-record some *pendendang* in several villages in west-coastal Sumatra and on Nias Island.

In summary, my third field trip in 2014 helped me give information about:

- (i) the relationship between the music-cultures in Kepulauan Banyak and to the west coast of Sumatra.
- (ii) the history and unique speech variety of the formal Haloban palace on the island of Pulau Tuangku, which was ruled by descendants of Pagaruyung royalty, and with influences from nearby Nias and Simeulue Islands, and
- (iii) the origin, style and spread of the apparently Dutch-influenced song-dance called *langser* in Haloban with *biola* and *gandang* (frame drum) accompaniment,

In March, 2016, I went back to Haloban along with my students in Syiah Kuala University in order to learn to perform the adok dance. They eventually performed the adok at the International Conference and Cultural Event of Aceh at Monash University in 28 September 2016.

On this my fourth field trip in Kepulauan Banyak, I saw that the improvements in the artistic situation in the Islands that I had hoped for during my trips in 2010, 2013, and 2014 had not occurred, especially in Haloban, indeed that the situation had worsened. Fewer elderly storytellers and artists were operating in the villages and towns that I revisited, due in part to their failing health or old age. Moreover, fewer young villagers were willing to take up offers to learn to perform the arts, probably due to lack of young role models. Although a few small performing group (*sanggar*) were operating in Pulau Balai and Pulau Tuangku, fewer school students were learning to perform the traditional genres than in 2010, and sadly, the promise generated by the Second Green Turtle Festival that had stimulated young people to perform them in 2010 had failed to materialise.

CHAPTER ONE

AIMS, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY, REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND SOUND SOURCES

1.1. Introduction

This thesis classifies, describes, and analyses the hitherto unresearched musical arts of the Urang Pulo (Bahasa Jamu Pulo/BJP)/Islanders in Kepulauan Banyak (the Banyak Archipelago), which lies off the southwestern shores of the Aceh-Singkil regency in the province of Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. It aims to discuss the Islanders' current discourse about their music-cultural identity in the west-coastal Sumatran context, the cultural memory of their musical history, and issues relating to the sustainability of their music culture, especially their deeply felt dilemma caused by its recent decline and how best to pass on the knowledge of it to the next generation. To fulfil these aims, I shall draw on the sparse secondary literature on the Islanders' culture and the ethnomusicological fieldwork-based knowledge gathered on my four trips in the Islands and west-coastal Sumatra.

My data comprises: i) recordings and information gained about the genres performed locally by the Urang Pulo and in the west-coastal towns and villages of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra; ii) field-based information on the Islanders' cultural memory and genealogies of the former court and artistic practices in Haloban on Pulau Tuangku; iii) the Islanders' artistic links with the nearby islands of Nias and Simeulue and the greater Pasisir-Malay cultural area along Sumatra's west coast; iv) the colonial-era literature, which documents the Islander's peripheral contact with European powers; and v) the evidence of the Islanders' typically Malay *kacokan*

(“syncretic”)⁶ tendency to combine select artistic elements from the cultures with which they have been in sustained contact.

By “music-cultural identity” I mean what the Islanders and the west-coastal Pasisir Malays view as the distinctive (BI., *unik*) qualities of their traditional musical arts, including their *dendang* (songs), instrumental music, rituals, devotional exercises, and bardic arts performed at weddings, circumcisions, other celebrations, and in their daily routines, as well as their growing substitution of commercial popular music in daily life and at some weddings, circumcisions and other celebratory ceremonies (*baralek*) in their two multiple-island districts (*kecamatan*): (i) *Kecamatan Pulau Banyak* (Banyak Island District), especially in its capital, Pulau Balai, and (ii) *Kecamatan Pulau Banyak Barat* (West Banyak Island District), especially in its capital and cultural centre, Haloban.

1.2. Some Delimitations

As individualism is not encouraged in the Urang Pulo culture, I will not include individual modern artists’ constructions of their self-identities in this thesis, but will focus on the collective identities within the social context of the Banyak Islander communities in relation to the Malay west-coast Sumatran culture as a whole. I shall also consider these aspects in relation to the cultural edicts of modern Indonesia, but exclude the popular arts and artists from my thesis for the simple reason that there is no local popular music tradition – performances by pop musicians in the capital Pulau Balai are rare and are normally imported from other parts of Indonesia. Some traditional bards and musicians develop partly individual performing styles, but they cannot be said to be “individualistic” or have a different identity from the traditional norm in the Islands, because they depend on and are an integral part of the communal

⁶ One scholar who has recently drawn attention to the term *kacokan* to describe the syncretic tendency of the greater Malay world is Leonard Andaya in his unpublished keynote address “The World of the Southern Malays” at the Second International Symposium on the Malay Musical Arts of Indonesia’s Riau Islands, 14-16 January 2015 at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music, Monash University.

artistic fabric. However, I will need to look at the concept of cultural identity promoted by the local government in order to satisfy provincial and national demands that the Islanders' cultural identity be defined.

Although I shall discuss Urang Pulo culture as part of the greater Malay west-coastal and offshore-island area of Sumatra, I shall not discuss these areas in any detail.

1.3. Some Terms, Definitions and Conceptual Categories

In Kepulauan Banyak as in many other Southeast Asian cultures, the Western concept of “music” is not relevant; indeed, the designation of *musik* (BI.), which is a term derived from the Dutch is normally problematic in Malay and Indonesian cultures, where there is no indigenous word for the Western notion of music as a separate conceptual category from dance, drama and other performing arts. Therefore, I am using the term “musical arts” to include all the performing arts that include sound or “music” in the Western and modern Indonesian sense as well as those forms of dance and movement that include musical accompaniment. The Urang Pulo musical arts as discussed in this thesis also incorporate the socio-cultural contexts of their performing arts, including the associated ceremonies, festivals and other events.

The local concept of “musical arts” in the Islands also embraces collaborative forms of traditional performances in which music, dance, fine art, and literature (including poetry and drama) or some of these forms are presented as one, just as for example in the famous *saman* song-dance from the Gayo highlands of Aceh, which is often called *tari saman* (the *saman* dance). It is not, of course, simply a dance, since the *saman* performers are also skilled singers of *pantun* (quatrain)-like texts in dialects of the Gayo language that express religious teachings, political criticism, or emotions such as love or hope, and their *adat* (traditional) social context includes the colours and motifs of the costumes worn and symbolise aspects of Gayo norms and traditions.

Similarly, it is not appropriate to generalise that *adok*, for example, is just an Islander “dance” or that the all-night chanting in *talibun* is just “song” in the Western and modern Indonesian sense. Each traditional performance in the Urang Pulo music-culture should be called by its own genre name rather than by a generic category to which the term “dance” or “song” is added. However, as the Urang Pulo tend orally to add *tari* or *lagu* to their traditional performances, I shall use the terms “music”, “dance”, “poem,” “art”, and even “theatre” to help explain performances to non-Urang Pulo readers.

Nor will I normally use the term “singers” to refer to the bardic story tellers of *talibun* poetic performances, or “*pantun* singers” in *adok* performances, and the like. The local term for “singer” is *pendendang* or *penampik* (in an *adok* performance), but the art of a *pendendang* or *penampik* does not only involve singing. The *pendendang* is an expert in creating *pantun* spontaneously in the correct chant-like way, using his knowledge of how *pantun*-style performers use standard musical pitches and durations and relate text to music. *Pendendang* are usually also dancers who have to provide guidance to the dancers whom they accompany. Because the details of a whole performance are only understood by the *pendendang*, I therefore prefer to use the term *pendendang* for the person who not only presents the vocal part of a traditional performance but is in charge of a performance. This applies in Kepulauan Banyak as well as in other areas of west coastal Sumatra and on the islands of Nias and Simeulue.

1.3.1. Terms that Refer to the Ethno-Lingual Groups and the Languages

On advice from Kismullah and other linguists, I shall use the neutral term “speech variety” rather than the more controversial term “dialect” in this thesis, given the disputes among linguists about that term’s meaning.

The term “Malay” or “Malayic” refers to a genetic grouping that includes the scores of speech varieties of Malay and Minangkabau in Sumatra (see Kartomi 2012a: 373-374). The term

Urang Pulo (lit. Islanders, *Orang Pulau*, BI.) is used to refer to the people living in Kepulauan Banyak by people who live in mainland Aceh-Singkil regency. Normally the Urang Pulo themselves simply to refer to themselves as “Pulo”, thereby distinguishing their oral lore, performances, current language (Bahasa Jamu Pulo) and customs from the so-called “Jamu” people who speak a cluster of west-coastal Sumatran languages called Bahasa Pasisir (“coastal languages”). Some Urang Pulo also speak Bahasa Nias (Nias language) but most only understand a limited vocabulary of Acehnese and Simeulue languages. Of course, the present younger generation also write and speak Bahasa Indonesia, which they learn in school.

Until the mid-20th century, the Islanders spoke their own distinctive ancestral language called Bahasa Haloban, the ancient name of which is Lingbano (see von Rosenberg, 1854). However today only the inhabitants of two villages – Haloban and Asantola in Pulau Tuangku, speak their own ancestral language. This language may be related to Bahasa Sigulai, which is spoken in south-coastal Simeulue Island to the north, and to Bahasa Nias which is spoken on Nias’ south coast (see Marsden (1811) 1966: 478-9 about possible connections between the ancestral Haloban language and Simeulue, also von Rosenberg, *ibid.*). Yet as I discovered in my study of the classical lyrics that are intoned to accompany the *adok* dance, their classical language is a mixture of the Old Haloban language called Lingbano and Jamu, i.e. it is a Jamu-Lingbano mix.

The Urang Pulo once lived in a settlement at Kampung Tulalit in the southern part of Tuangku Island, where locals and migrants from Nias and Simeulue intermarried before they moved to present-day Asantola in the middle of the former Tuangku Kingdom, which was subsequently ruled by the royal descendants of a prince whom they requested be appointed by the Sultan of Pagaruyung and sent to live among them (see further Chapter III).⁷

⁷ This information was gleaned from my interviews with Bp. Misri Caniago, Bp. Anhar Sitanggang, and several elders in Haloban and Asantola during my field trips in 2013, and 2014. They told me what they had learned from

1.3.2. Geographical and Administrative Terms

Kepulauan Banyak, as the official name of the region where the Urang Pulo reside, is a group of archipelagos situated in the Indian Ocean off the shore of west-coastal Sumatra's Aceh Province. However, the formal name of the archipelago, Kepulauan Banyak has often been written inconsistently, becoming Pulau Banyak in official publications, Indonesian maps, and tourist brochures, e.g. those published by government departments in Singkil Regency or Aceh Province. This is the reason why today most people within or outside Kepulauan Banyak often refer to it orally as Pulau Banyak. In this thesis, I have chosen to use the form Kepulauan Banyak or its translation: Banyak Islands or Banyak Archipelago.

Kepulauan Banyak is divided into two administrative districts (*kecamatan*): Kecamatan Pulau Banyak and Kecamatan Pulau Banyak Barat. These two districts are now part of Aceh-Singkil Regency, though from the 1950s to 1999 they were part of the much larger South Aceh Regency. Most Urang Pulo say in conversation that there are 99 islands, most of which are unnamed. This figure does not represent an actual statistical count of the number of islands but simply indicates that there are “*banyak*” or “many islands”. However, according to official Indonesian maps, the archipelago contains 33 named islands and many unnamed ones, some of which disappeared in the sea after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, with several small islands having been flooded and submerged at the same time and others rising up above sea level (see **Maps 1.1 and 1.2**). It is also documented in Rosenberg’s account, dated 1878, that there were only 51 islands named (Rosenberg 1878: 117) while nowadays only a few islands are frequented by international back-packers, who say they appreciate not only the green turtles and waves that they like to surf but also the islands’ exquisite maritime panoramas and natural beauty of the undergrowth.

their predecessors about the undocumented history of the Tuangku Kingdom on Pulau Tuangku. See Marsden (1811) 1966: 478-9) about possible connections between the Haloban and Simeulue languages.

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Map 1.1: Kepulauan Banyak (circled in red) in Aceh-Singkil Regency, Aceh.

Map 1.2: Tuangku Island, showing the names of the seven villages (in red) and the location of the former royal centre at Haloban (a yellow dot).



I shall now review the literature that I found most useful for this research, firstly on fieldwork methodology.

1.4. Review of the Literature and Research Sources

Literature on Urang Pulo music-culture is non-existent to date, and publications on the historical, anthropological and ecological aspects of Kepulauan Banyak are minimal. However, the extensive field and published research on Acehnese music by Kartomi is relevant to the Islanders' music and lingual practices, because the Islanders include many Acehnese words in their song texts and everyday speech, and several of the Islanders' musical genres such as *dikie* and *talibun* are also performed along Aceh's west coast. Moreover, many Islanders speak the west Acehnese Jamu language, which is known in west Aceh as Jamee.

General publications on the Islanders' history, languages and religion are brief and few and far between, but they are important for this research. In his classic book *The History of Sumatra* (published from 1771 to 1779), the English writer William Marsden ([1811] 1966: 478-9) noted the existence of the Kepulauan Banyak which he named *Pulo Baniak* (Baniak Islands), writing that its inhabitants, like those of the nearby Pulo Babi (also called Hog Island, and located at the most western of Pulau Tuangku) of Pulo Baniak, were "Mahometans" (Muslims) who spoke a similar language to that of the Maros or Orang Maruwi (Maruwi people) who initially settled on Pulo Nako-nako to the southwest of Pulo Nias, Pulo Babi, and Simeulue. Although mentioned briefly in his book, the German scholar von Rosenberg (1854) provided no other information on the religious life of the Urang Pulo in the 18th century, their interconnection with people in neighboring islands, nor the possible source of the Urang Pulo's ancient Bahasa Maruwi or of the Bahasa Haloban, also known as Bahasa Lingbano. His article was translated into English and published by the English writer Logan (Logan 1856).

The Australian linguist Mark Durie included the Islanders' spoken language as a speech variety of Malay, but as he never visited the Islands he was unaware of the ancient Maruwi language, which is also called Lingbano. According to his linguistic classification of the languages spoken in Aceh its languages, including its Malay speech varieties belong to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of Austronesian (Durie 1990, Daud 1997, Thurgood 2007). The colonial-era ethnologist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje was also unaware of the Islanders' ancient Lingbano language and its contemporary Jamu variant of Malay; thus, neither are mentioned in his two-volume book titled *The Acehnese* (Snouck-Hurgronje 1906). In September 2016, the Australian linguist Robert Amery and Acehnese linguist Zulfadli Azis began field research into the languages of the Banyak Islands, and expect that a team of Acehnese researchers will delve more deeply into this neglected linguistic area. They believe that "Bahasa Haloban is most closely related to Bahasa Devayan spoken in the south of Simeulue Island, and that the

languages of Simeulue and Haloban are much more closely related to Bahasa Nias than to other languages in the province of Aceh". They also found "some linguistic evidence to strongly suggest that the main direction of migration has been from Nias to Simeulue, and not the other way around; ... and that Haloban may have been a back migration from Pulau Simeulue" (pers. comm., Robert Avery, 7 October 2016).

The only other ethnomusicologist beside myself who has carried out field work in the Banyak Islands and along Aceh's Jamee-speaking west coast is Margaret Kartomi, who visited the west coastal area in 2008-2010 and published on the Jamee music-culture in 2010. In her book *Musical Journeys in Sumatra*, Kartomi also writes extensively on the Banyak Islander-related music-culture of Sumatra's west coast, especially Barus, Sibolga, and coastal West Sumatra, extending south to Bengkulu but excluding the offshore islands such as the Kepulauan Banyak. In her book chapter titled "From Singkil to Natal" (2012a: 221-50), which is based on her fieldwork along Sumatra's west coast between 1971 and 1978, she argues – as I also found in the field – that the *sikambang* tradition is the most complete representation of the local culture, including song-dances and storytelling.

In fact, she writes, the *sikambang* tradition is as pervasive in west-coastal Sumatra's culture as the *wayang* theatre tradition is in Java where, as is well-known, the *wayang* epitomises the music, dance, drama, dramatic plots and philosophy of the Javanese. She adds that the importance of *sikambang* and *wayang* in west-coastal Sumatran and Javanese cultures respectively resembles that of Shakespeare's plays in English culture since the 18th century.

In her 2012 book, Kartomi also writes about the lengthy legend of *Sikambang* – a group of stories about a mermaid-queen – that is told by bards and sung by vocalists along Sumatra's west coast, as illustrated by Kartomi's field recordings, photographs and music transcriptions. These so-called *sikambang* songs with *biola* and drum accompaniment – called *lagu kapri* in

the Barus area – are often sung at life event ceremonies such as baby thanksgivings and weddings, and are performed with dances accompanied (minimally) by *biola* and frame drums.

The *sikambang*-linked genres are performed in slightly different styles, repertoires and dialects in different parts of the coast (Kartomi 2012a: 221-250).

1.4.1. Fieldwork Methodology

Kepulauan Banyak has been totally neglected by ethnomusicologists, anthropologists and historians. As I am the first to study the history of the Urang Pulo music-cultures in the Banyak Islands, I have informed myself of suitable research methods by reading works by ethnomusicologists who have similarly embarked on and theorised about virgin-territory music research, including Blum (1991: 1-20) and Kartomi (1997a: 217-225), and I decided to space out my trips so as to be able to gain a longitudinal view of the music-culture picture of change in the area, that is, over a period of six years between 2010 and 2016.

While in the field I recorded performances throughout my main area of study, focusing on Haloban and other villages in Kepulauan Banyak, and also in my secondary area, the Jamu-speaking communities in west-coastal Aceh and North Sumatra, and the associated Pagaruyung area in Kabupaten (Regency) Padang Panjang, Solok, Pariaman and Bukit Tinggi in West Sumatra. There I hoped to obtain information on the history of the Urang Pulo relationship with the Jamu-speaking west-coastal Sumatran mainlanders as expressed in the performing arts, and about any mutual or one-way borrowing of the performing arts that resulted in syncretic genres in one or both areas.

Because the Urang Pulo also speak the language of neighbouring southern parts of Nias Island, it was also necessary for me to seek out data there on the history of the Islanders' relationships with communities in Nias. As I discovered, the historical interactions between the two areas have largely been due to the Islanders' trade and intermarriages over the centuries with brides

from families in Nias and the mainland Jamu-speaking towns of Singkil, Barus and Sibolga in west-coastal Sumatra, as well as the Islanders' migrations to and from the west coast of Sumatra and Nias and Simeulue islands. I concluded that only with some knowledge of the history of these relationships could I explain the *kacokan*/syncretic nature of the largely Malay music and dance culture in Kepulauan Banyak and its distinctive music-cultural identity compared to that of the Jamu-speaking areas on mainland Sumatra.

I made four field trips: the first in June 2010 during the days leading up to and during Kepulauan Banyak's ten-day Green Turtle Festival when I made my first recordings. The second was from July to December 2013 in Pulau Balai, Pulau Ujung Batu and Pulau Tuangku when I recorded as much of the repertoire as I could, the third in 2014 for a more extended period of time as I travelled along the Malay-Pasisir west coast of Sumatra, Nias Island and Pagaruyung in West Sumatra Province, and the fourth in mid-2016 when I focussed specifically on the arts practiced in Haloban and Asantola villages.

In order to avoid imposing theoretical constructs on the Urang Pulo music-culture, including methods of practice, teaching and learning, I adopted a semi-grounded approach to my research in my first two field trips, allowing the general subject of Kepulauan Banyak's traditional arts, recent changes, and the topics of artistic conceptualisation, practice, social context, uniqueness, and style to guide my questions and data collection. In the next two trips I modified my method according to my experiences by focusing on a firm theoretical approach which included observations of the arts' *kacokan* qualities, local concepts of performance structure, the question of the people's and the government's concepts of their music-cultural identity, and the problems the Urang Pulo are encountering in their desire to conserve their artistic genres and develop into the future.

The aforementioned Urang Pulo (lit. Islanders, Orang Pulau, BI.), whose musical arts and music-cultural identity I am describing and analysing in this thesis, is the term applied to the Islanders by the residents of Aceh-Singkil regency on the Sumatran mainland, whereas the Urang Pulo themselves simply use the term Pulo to refer to themselves.

1.4.2. Identity Theory

My thinking about the Islanders' views of their music-cultural identity has been informed by the publications of ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes, who examined the significance of music in the construction of national and regional identities and ethnicities in his lengthy introduction to the edited book *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (ed. M. Stokes 1997). His suggested ways of understanding music as social practice and as a focus for discursive evocations of "place" have also led me to consider differences between local musical styles as they relate to their village "places" in their insular environment.

Another ethnomusicologist who influenced my ideas of music-culture identity in the Islands is Jennifer Fraser in her book *Gongs and Pop Songs*, where she examines *talempong* gong chime musics' traditional use in West Sumatra villages and focuses on urban and village people's use of *talempong* and popular music *pop Minang* to assert an ethnic identity (Fraser 2015). Her account of the impact of the different traditional and modern art policies of the New Order and Reformation governments (i.e. centralisation versus regional autonomy and tourism) is also applicable in Kepulauan Banyak and coastal Pasisir-Malay Sumatra.

Thomas Turino applied the semiotic theory of American philosopher and scientist Charles Peirce (1839-1914)⁸ in his attempt to explain emotion and identity in music, focusing especially on the iconic and indexical types of signification.⁹ His writings raised such questions

⁸ Peirce, C S, 1955. *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. J Buchler, New York: Dover.

⁹ "Peirce's semiotic theory is significant as an avenue for understanding musical affectivity in different parts of ourselves and experiences, and the special potential of music for the construction of personal and social identities" (Turino 1999: 249-250).

in my mind as: How do the *dendang sikambang* signify emotion and identity at their different artistic levels. How do the men and the women view their performances emotionally and as representing either iconic or indexical types of signification as signs of their shared identity and representation of their area and heritage?

1.4.3. Culture Contact Theory

One of my main areas of interest in this thesis lies in the area of culture contact. My ideas were initially based on Kartomi's contact and transculturation theories propounded in her 1983 article "The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact", published in the journal *Ethnomusicology*. My observations led me to conclude that there were many kinds of two-way and three-way contact in the Malay Urang Pulo music-culture, indeed that it is characterised by a *kacokan* (syncretic) tendency that is stronger than in most other areas of the Malay world of Southeast Asia, despite its relative isolation, and that this tendency has led to several processes of transculturation in (or transformation of) the culture.

Select writings by two of Kartomi's previous PhD students have also informed my research. They include the thesis by Iwan Dzulvan Amir titled *Sing, Adapt, Persevere: Dynamics of Traditional Vocal Performers in the Islamic Region of Aceh from the Late 19th to the Early 21st Century* (2006). Part of his chapter on the Jamu (the Malay term) or Jamee (Acehnese term) music of Aceh's west and south coast provided good comparative data with mine, especially his extensive discussion of the history of Aceh, including the Malay-speaking cultures such as on the Banyak Islands and west-coastal Aceh. The thesis by David J. Goldsworthy titled: *Melayu Music of North Sumatra* (1979), includes useful chapters on music of North Sumatra's west coast that is related to that of Kepulauan Banyak, especially the sections on the music culture of Barus and Sibolga.

Other useful writings on the social and linguistic context of the Kepulauan Banyak and northwest coastal Sumatra's music-culture includes the following: an article by Hutapea (2013) on the texts of the *dendang sikambang* in Sibolga; Manalu's reference (2012) to the performance of *dendang sikambang* at Adat Sumando weddings; Armia's thesis (2003) on the syntax of the Haloban language; and Al Fairusy (2012) who wrote on the fishing economy in Kepulauan Banyak.

1.4.4. The Recent Decline in the Practice of the Performing Arts

Few Islanders have television sets and listen to the radio except in the capital Pulau Balai, which houses the government communication networks, and in most villages, including at Haloban, the people generate their own electricity for a certain number of hours in the day and night. Thus, until very recently the people could only practice their own traditional musical arts, uninfluenced by the national media, at their *baralek*. Yet there has been a decline in the number of younger villagers who can perform the traditional music and dances; moreover, opportunities to perform for government and private business functions are still quite rare. As I shall explain below, I have found that the main reasons for the continuing decline in the practice and maintenance of the Kepulauan Banyak Islanders' traditional musical arts are the growing economic poverty of the people, partly due to ocean trawlers limiting the people's fish catches, and the lack of interest shown by most government officials and businesses in sponsoring performances. The result has been that most people can no longer afford to celebrate their weddings and other ceremonies for several days and nights as in the past, and therefore sponsor only limited traditional performances at their shortened celebrations, sometimes resorting to playing recorded music on cassette players. In the process, the performative knowledge and understanding of the traditional arts is diminishing in the population. I, too, discovered on my field trips over the past six years that some of the traditional musical genres that I recorded on my early trips to Kepulauan Banyak are now rarely performed. Not

surprisingly, some artistic leaders, in Haloban especially, are very concerned about this lack of continuity in the Urang Pulo traditions.

Despite the general decline, however, some beautiful traditional lullabies and are still sung every day by parents to their babies as they swing them to sleep on their hips or in baby hammocks (see Chapter VI). Unlike much other vocal music apart from the *dendang sikambang* repertoire, many lullaby texts are in the local Haloban language mixed with the Melayu Jamu Pulo (“Islander Malay”) speech variety or dialect, which differs in some respects from the Melayu Jamu Pasisir (“west-coast Sumatran Malay”) speech variety. Moreover, their melodies are still sung with elaborate melodic ornamentation. These lullabies are important in that they continue to preserve the musical and idiomatic textual traditions of the Urang Pulo. Clearly the lullabies have managed to survive the radical changes caused by the forces of modernisation. Presumably this is because the people cannot help but remember the lullabies which constituted their first experience of their own music culture, and this then subsequently affects their whole musical lives.

1.4.5. On Cultural Endangerment, Sustainability and Revitalisation Theory

My field experiences also led me to read and deepen my knowledge of cultural endangerment and revitalisation theory. I was informed mainly by ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon (2016), folklorist Gregory Hansen (2016) on intangible cultural heritage, ethnomusicologist Catherine Grant (2014a and 2014b) on endangered musical heritage, and the linguist Neil Coulter (2015).

Jeff Todd Titon wrote with great insight about how orality (sound) and commonality (commons) can contribute to the current heritage discourse on cultural endangerment, one that emphasises collective values rather than economic value, and stewardship rather than ownership. He argued that expressive culture should be regarded as a common group possession, and that orality – which explains the existence of variants and versions and

consequently the “impersonality” (i.e. the societal, not “individual” ownership) of a music-culture like Haloban’s, and that this attribute of commonality offers cultural leaders and scholars a strategy to help sustain a community’s “expressive culture” and resilience helping sustain and revitalise a music-culture like Haloban’s.

In his critique of current terminological debates about the differences between “academic folklore” and “public folklore” in folklore studies, Gregory Hansen notes that traditional expressive culture that comprises the material for our study needs to remain vibrant in contemporary life in the societies that have produced the folklore, and that both academics and public leaders need to recognise the place of community-based cultural expression as integral to heritage. He recommends that “a more socially responsive approach be adopted that is relevant to ways that heritage professionals assess folklore as intangible cultural heritage” (Hansen 2016: 622).

I was interested in the debate between the ethnomusicologist Catherine Grant and the linguist Neil Coulter (2015:126-129) on whether UNESCO’s adopted approach toward solving language endangerment problems can help find a practical solution to problems of musical maintenance. In her search for a practical “objective” method to measure “musical vitality” and to solve problems of music-cultural endangerment, Grant studied UNESCO’s 2003 “Language Vitality and Endangerment Framework” paper and adapted twelve of its factors that she believes affect music, including intergenerational transmission, numbers of practitioners and participants, changes in context and function, engagement with mass media, availability of resources, government policies, attitudes toward the music, and documentation. She called this a “Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework”, and proceeded to measure the music vitality rating of various musical genres in select communities.

In a review of her work in the journal *Ethnomusicology Forum*, however, Neil Coulter questioned the advisability of transferring methods developed for language maintenance to music maintenance. He wrote that “A particular language may be vital for a community in ways that may not transfer directly to particular music genres” (Coulter 2015: 127). True, he argued, music is like language in many ways, but as Stephen Feld wrote, “Music is somewhat like and almost the same as many things, depending on how good your imagination is” (Feld 1974: 202). Coulter went on to say: “what is at stake in music endangerment is not so much the loss of any particular genre, but rather the diminishment of opportunities for community music grooving (making). Musical choice is more flexible than language choice in key ways, and this reduces the pressure on any specific genre. The emphasis instead is on the freedom of the community to express itself in the ways that are meaningful to them over time – sometimes seeming to ‘die.’ The crux of this discussion, for me, is not the life or death of a genre, but the opportunities for community members to express themselves together musically (Coulter 2015: 128).

As I will explain in Chapter IX, I agree with Grant’s recommended advocacy approach to solving problems of music endangerment and promoting transgenerational transmission. But if her method were to be applied in my Haloban study, I would need to assess and promote the vitality of the *adok* genre, the lullaby genre, the *dendang sikambang* genre, and all the other genres, whereas in my view it is necessary to promote all the genres in the culture before we can assess and improve its ‘vitality’. Indeed, I wish to be an advocate, an activist, and work from my position as music staff at the Syiah Kuala University toward revitalising the arts and culture of the whole Kepulauan Banyak as part of the greater Malay west-coastal and offshore island area of Sumatra – not each genre separately.

I will now outline the analytical methods I used in my study of each genre.

1.5. Music-Analytical Method

1.5.1. Transcriptions and Analysis of Melody

As no form of music notation is used by the Islanders, and I need to communicate an overall impression of the music to readers of my thesis, I found I needed to transcribe select musical examples as a basis for my ethnomusicological readers' understanding of my analyses. My transcriptions are presented in an adapted form of Western staff notation, with tones pitched above or below the tempered pitches that are notated by a plus or minus sign above or below the note as the case may be. Kepulauan Banyak *pendendang* and audiences are tolerant of pitch variability and do not adhere to a concept of "in-tuneness" or fixed pitches as classical Western musicians tend to. However, I have presented the approximate tonal palette used in most transcribed excerpts in ascending "scalewise" succession above each transcription. My use of ascending tonal palettes is Western-derived, for the Islanders do not have a concept of tonal ascent or descent, yet they can sing songs using scalewise solfa syllables rather than song texts.

As an Acehnese, I am of course an outsider to Kepulauan Banyak music-culture, though there are similarities between the uses and functions of its traditional performances such as the *dikie* and other Muslim aspects of the Islanders' culture, with Aceh. I have tried to look at the Islander's music-culture both as an outsider and an insider, rejecting "the view that there is only one local view of things ... fully discoverable by the all-knowing ethnographer" (Berger 2008: 70). Both approaches to fieldwork have been shown to be more and more simplistic in a globalising world (Wong 2008). Yet as Schutz has proposed, researchers can indeed find a partially shared experience with their research collaborators which can mitigate the exaggeration of cultural distance (Berger 2008: 70).

When possible I have always aimed to use terms and descriptions favoured by my interlocutors in my musical analyses, classifications and categories. However, no local music notational

method is used in the area, and I chose to use Western notation in my transcriptions rather than solfa or other notation systems in order to engage the majority of my future readers.

As the Urang Pulo music-culture was initially unfamiliar to me, I adopted a phenomenological method of analysis based on the idea that listeners of unfamiliar music normally acquire their tonal bearings in a new song or piece by noting – usually unconsciously – the highest and lowest tones and the initial and final tones (Batstone 1969:94). With each transcription analysed, I have therefore noted the pitch of the Initial Tone (IT), the Final Tone (FT), the Highest Tone (HT), and the Lowest Tone (LT).

I also noticed that many Islander melodies have a steeper overall descent than others, and only a few have an overall ascent or stay on the same level. I therefore measured the overall ascending or descending direction of melodic movement in a song or excerpt using the “level shift” formula developed by Kolinsky (1965: 240-64), namely: $100(a-b)/c$ degrees, where “a” is the interval between the lowest and the final tone, “b” is the interval between the initial and the lowest tone, and “c” is the range of the song (measured in the number of semitones).

Melodies of songs (*dendang*) and *biola* parts are usually rendered with a high degree of melisma (defined as “more than one note sung to a syllable of text”) and melodic direction change (the singers talk of “higher” and “lower” tones to designate notes of higher and lower frequency, like Western musicians). However, some singers produce less changes of melodic direction than others, and intoners of stories such as *talibun* are almost syllabic, use a large amount of adjacent repeated tones. To be more precise I have therefore measured and calculated each melodic rendition’s percentage of melodic direction change and each rendition’s percentage of adjacent tonal repetition, using formulae developed by Kartomi (1974a: 181), namely: $100x/y$ percent, where “x” is the number of melodic direction changes

and “y” is the total number of tones in the song or excerpt or song, and $100z/y$ percent, where “z” is the number of repeated tones.

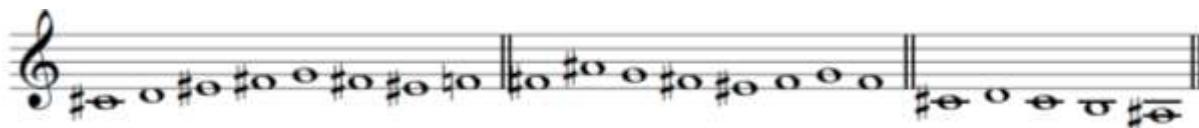
In order to confirm the musicians’ designations of the hierarchy of tones performed, including the main and secondary main tones (*nada pokok* and *nada pokok kedua*, I prepared (i) a hierarchical series of tones performed in a melody or excerpt and (ii) its “melos,” meaning the main tones of a melody, excluding any tonal repetition and incidental ornament (*bungaran*), for example, three phrases from the *dendang sikambang adok* melody in Chapter VI:

1. The hierarchical series of tones in **Figure 1.1**, where the main tone *nada pokok* is shown as a breve and the secondary main tone (*nada pokok kedua*) as a minim, the less important tones as stemless white notes, and what I call the “neighbour tones” (i.e. a half tone below the *nada pokok* or the *nada pokok kedua*) as stemless black notes.

Figure 1.1: Nada Pokok



Figure 1.2: Melos



Melos: PHRASE 1

PHRASE 2

PHRASE 2a

The hierarchy of tones/Tonal Hierarchy in this transcribed performance arranged in scalewise fashion above (in **Figure 1.2.**) includes: the central tone, which for easy recognition I have notated as a semibreve; the second most important tone which I have notated as a minim; and the note immediately below those two main tones, which I have called the “leading note” and notated as a black note. The tones are notated in both Western staff notation and in the solfa-like number script which local musicians can read.

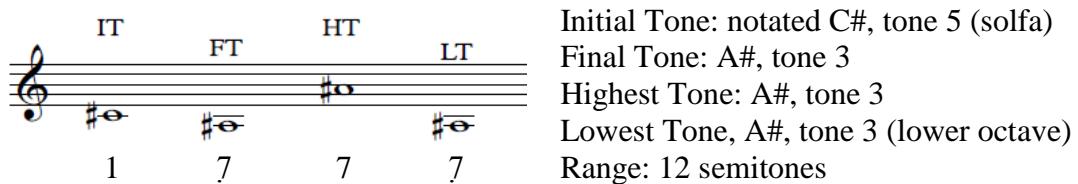
Thus, this vocal excerpt, based on a melos which is rendered in a highly ornamental style, revolves around 4 important tones (**Figure 1.4**):

Example:

Initial Tone: A, tone 7
 Final Tone: E#, tone 4 (raised)
 Highest Tone: F#, tone 5
 Lowest Tone: E#, tone 4 (raised)

Using these tones, I then calculated the amount of tonal repetition, the amount of melodic direction change, and the level shift

Figure 1.4: Melodic Direction Change



1.5.2. Rhythm, Metre, Tempo and Dynamics

Sometimes musicians say that they “freely improvise” the melodic, rhythmic and ornamental elements (*bungaran*, “ornament) that they incorporate in a performance. The term “improvisation” is of course hotly contested in the musicological literature. However, when an expert *pendendang* says that his performance “is sung or played with improvisation” (BI., *dinyanyikan atau dimainkan dengan improvisasi*), we know that he means he is performing with a degree of freedom of choice on the spur of the moment and on the basis of his deep knowledge of the relevant stylistic norms of melody, rhythm, metre, form, ornamentation and word-music relationships, and his memory of typical melodic and rhythmic motives which he creatively applies and invents new ones when he thinks it is appropriate.

Most of the traditional vocal music is indeed performed in *irama bebas* (free rhythm and metre), with irregular stresses that are partly determined by the relationships between the musical line and the unwritten lyric, or in some of the Muslim *dikie/zikir* intoning, with the

written text. I have depicted this in the transcriptions with tentative dotted barlines before each slightly stressed note. Where a musician performs in regular tempo (as in the violin and frame drum accompaniments to the dance songs), I have noted this with a metronome measurement. Cyclic drum rhythms or rhythmic motives and other regular metred musical lines are normally notated with a time signature. All ceremonial Urang Pulo singing must be performed at a high degree of dynamic intensity so that it can be heard throughout the whole village, and because it rarely varies in intensity, I have not normally notated it in the transcriptions.

The frame drum (*gandang*) players refer to the standard and freely improvised rhythmic motives that they play by uttering onomatopoeic syllables to represent the sounds for each rhythm they want to depict orally, and they also use the syllables when teaching a pupil to play. I have therefore written these syllables for the main left- and right-hand drum rhythms at the start of each transcription. There are two sounds that are so designated by an onomatopoeic syllable: a deep, resonant, undamped sound produced by beating above the drum's mid-point with the right hand, which is called *dung*, and notated "d" in my transcriptions, and a sharp, relatively high-pitched, damped or undamped left-hand stroke on or near the rim called *pak*, notated "p".

1.6. Sound and Other Research Sources

Other research sources used in this thesis include Kartomi's unpublished 2010 field notes and recordings from the Kepulauan Banyak as well as the résumés of her and Hidris Kartomi's fieldwork in the Aceh Selatan and Subussalam regencies of Aceh in the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as the field recordings and notes from their trips along Sumatra's west coast between Aceh and Lampung in the 1970s-1990s. It should be noted that all her annotated recordings and other Sumatra-related data are deposited in the Music Archive of Monash University (which she established in 1975 and contains the recordings and other data gathered on her

annual field trips throughout Sumatra till the time of writing). Kartomi's field notes and book (2012) on west-coastal Pasisir Malayu communities in North Sumatran regencies, especially in Natal, Mandailing, Sibolga, and Tapanuli Tengah, have been referenced in my thesis in relation to my own field recordings. In particular, my chapters on the Urang Pulo of *dendang sikambang*, *talibun*, *buai*, and *langser* repertoires in this thesis are based on Kartomi's recordings, transcriptions and publications from the 1970s as well as my fieldwork on the Kepulauan Banyak and Sumatra's west-coastal arts that I recorded in Singkil, Barus, Sorkam, Sibolga, Jago Jago, Natal, Padang Panjang and in Saniang Baka village in Solok of West Sumatra, and in Sifahando village in North Nias Regency of Nias Island.

In the next chapter, I shall discuss the various musico-lingual groups of the Urang Pulo, focussing on the people in the former court centre of Haloban and the *perantau*/immigrants from along Sumatra's west coast and the neighbouring islands of Nias and Simeulue.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ISLANDS, THE ISLANDERS, A CLASSIFICATION OF THEIR MUSICAL ARTS, AND MUSIC IN DAILY LIFE

This chapter introduces the physical, human and economic geography of the Islands, including the effects of the 2004 tsunami, and then discusses the Islanders' ethno-lingual groups and speech varieties, presents a classification of the Urang Pulo's traditional musical arts (*I. tradisi berkesenian musikal*), and finally tells an anecdote about music in daily life.

2.1. The Physical, Economic and Human Geography of the Banyak Islands and Islanders

The Banyak Archipelago/Kepulauan Banyak is a group of small islands with an area of 319 square kilometres. It is located ca. 29 kilometres off the shores of Sumatra's Aceh Province in the Indian Ocean between the large islands of Simeulue to the north and Nias to the south. It is divided into two administrative districts (*kecamatan*): (i) Pulau Banyak (Banyak Islands), with its capital at Pulau Balai on Balai Island, and (ii) Pulau Banyak Barat (West Banyak Islands) with its capital at Haloban on the largest island, Pulau Tuangku (lit. meaning "My Lord Island", the location of the former kingdom of Tuangku at Haloban). These two *kecamatan* are now part of Aceh Singkil Regency, though from the 1950s to 1999 they were part of the much larger South Aceh Regency.

In recent times, various government surveys of the area reported that Kepulauan Banyak comprises around 71 islands, of which 33 are named, plus additional mangrove stands in shallow areas off some islands¹⁰. However, the Islanders consistently pointed out to us that there are 99 islands, which is a numerologically significant number, and that the number is mentioned in a local legend. Both estimates differ from the number of 51 islands observed in

¹⁰ See <aceh.bps.go.id> retrieved 4 June 2011

the 1850s and listed in the Banyak Island group in a report by H. von Rosenberg (1878: 117)¹¹ and commented on by J.R. Logan in English which I shall summarise for comparison with my own observations in 2010-2016. Rosenberg's 1878 article is titled *Geografische en Ethnografische Beschrijving van het district Singkel, de landen liggende langs de Simpang-Kanan en de Banjak-eilanden, benevens eenige korte aanteekeningen nopens de Simpang-Kiri* (“Geographic and Ethnographic Descriptions of the Singkel District, the lands lying along the Simpang-Kanan (river) and the Banyak Islands, and a short report on the Simpang-Kiri”). Although Logan's 1856 article is based entirely on Rosenberg's Dutch language report of 1854, I shall only quote from his article, titled “The Maruwi of the Baniak Islands: Ethnology of the Indo-Pacific Islands, Comparative Vocabularies etc.”, because it is in English.

Taking his cues from Rosenberg, Logan described the geography of the islands as follows (Logan 1856: 18):

The Baniak group consists of numerous islets and rocks scattered irregularly over an area of about 20 miles from E to W... and 27 miles from N. to S....in its broadest and longest portions.... 52 of the islands have received names, and there are about 30 others nameless. The nearest islands [to Sumatra] are: Pulo Tuwanku, Bangkeru, Ujong Batu, Arungan, Balambak Gadang, Panjang, Bagu, Sikandang, Tebu-tebu, Timbarat, Mataari, Salambau, Lamun, Penghulu, Balambak Kichil, Simoh, Bahlong, Rangit Gadang, Baleh and Laraga, Asap, Samut, Sorong alu, laurat, Pinang, Sirong Gantong, Lania, Babisi, Tailana, Tabala, Rangit Kichil, Sagu-Sagub, Lawodu, Busuh Kasih, Gosong Suwang-suwang, Gosong Samidin, Polo Mandan Kati, Gosong Sijanjei, Pulo Mariabu, Pulau Tabala, Raga-raga, Meytee, Panjang, Gosong Pasir, Gosong Kataping, Pulo Batu, Ula-ula, Gosong Sitongka, and Pulo Melela.

Of this list, the islands of Bagu, Tebu-Tebu, Timbarat, Salambau, Penghulu, Simoh, Laraga, Asap, Samut, Sorong Alu, Pinang, Sirong Gantong, Tailana, Sagu-sagu, Lawodu, Busuh Kasih, Gosong Suwang-suwang, Gosong Samudin, Mandan, Gosong Sijanjei, Meytee, Panjang,

¹¹ In 1878 Rosenberg also published: “Die Inselkette westlich von Sumatra, in “*Land und Leute, Malayische Archipel*. Leipzig, Verlag von Gustav Weigel. 11-218.

Gosong Pasir, Gosong Kataping, Batu, Ula-Ula, Gosong Sitongka and Melela either no longer exist or have been renamed.

Rosenberg/Logan wrote that of the scores of islands, two were most conspicuous – (i) Tuwanku (modern spelling Tuangku), with its several low hill ranges sloping gently down to the flat lands and the coast, but with some parts sinking abruptly into the sea, and (ii) Bangkaru, the latter being almost entirely mountainous. Further, Tuwanku's highest hill, called “Gunong Trasa” or “Tuwanku,” rises in the north and east of Tuangku Bay and its surrounding hills are covered with tall forest trees; the people do not dare to climb up the hill for fear of death caused by a bad spirit in a grave. The Urang Pulo visit ‘Bangkaru very seldom and hold it in superstitious dread, believing that it is haunted by bad spirits, who convey it to the souls of the dead – a remnant of the old Malayu-Polynesian creed” A heavy surf prevails on the banks – so violent along the southwest and south coast of Tuwanku that land cannot be approached, also in Bangkaru (Logan, 1856: 4).

The above description of Tuangku's highest hill and Bangkaru Island as places of dread and evil spirits according to traditional animist beliefs tallies with the Islanders' origin legend which is recounted in Chapter III.

According to my interlocutors in Haloban, the sea between the islands is very dangerous even for vessels of no great size, owing to the numerous coral reefs, sand banks, and strong currents. We also experienced very shallow seas, coral reefs and sand banks in our sampans in some areas. Thus, Rosenberg/Logan comments are still true today: “The coral banks are enlarging and mangroves spreading.... The coral banks lying in stripes are frequently so close to the surface that even in a sampan it is necessary to step out in order to drag it over them, often a hundred yards from the nearest land (Logan *ibid*).

Logan and Rosenberg wrote that streams (*ayer*, B.M. *air*) are found only on the two largest islands – Tuangku and Bangkaru, and that they are really only rivulets, naming: Ayer Sentole, Ayer Sirohi, Ayer Luan-wano, Ayer Sesagu, Ayer Tatalo (the largest of which is “7 yards wide and 3 feet deep at the mouth”) and that they all flow into Tuangku Bay. Today the Tuangku Islanders say they remember streams flowing in the past, including one near the former palace, but that they have dried up.

Logan and Rosenberg also wrote about the climate, commenting that it is slightly cooler than west-coast mainland Sumatra’s, with winds blowing more frequently, and that storms in the northwest are more violent, usually with thunder and lightning. In my experience these comments apply to this day.

Their comments on the soil fertility, produce grown and wild animals also still apply. As they wrote, the soil of the higher islands is generally fertile, supporting a prolific vegetation, though the coral tract areas are less fertile. The people produce coconuts, sago, *durian*, *nangka* fruit, *pinang*/betel nut, *nipah* palm fruit, bamboo, rattan, and timber from forest trees, *ubi* (edible roots, sweetcorn), *kaladi* (taro), *glaga* (wild sugar cane or grasses), rice from the paddy fields, as well as several varieties of fish and shellfish. Wild animals include crocodiles and snakes, and domestic animals include dogs, cats, goats, rats, monkeys, bats, squirrels, a few wild buffaloes, and wild hogs, the latter of which ravage their crops if they are not fenced in (Logan 1856:12).

The elders whom I have interviewed also say the Islands have been affected by tsunamis in the past, including the great earthquake and subsequent tsunami that hit parts of Sumatra’s western and northern shores on 26th December, 2004. As is normal, after this tsunami, some tiny new islands emerged and others disappeared, as recounted by our boatsman who was rowing

Margaret Kartomi and me across the sea to Haloban on Tuangku Island in June 2010, pointing to some new islands that have not yet been named.

Compared with the devastation on Aceh's north coast, the effects of the 2004 tsunami in the Islands was not great, though due to the fault line between Bangkuru and Tuangku, the island of Bangkuru rose and Tuangku Island dropped. The earthquake occurred at the closest point to the epicentre which was slightly to the east of Bangkuru Island. However, after the metre-high surge hit the villages on Tuangku, the tsunami waves flowed 100–200 metres into the dense forest, contaminating the wells with saltwater, and the fresh sand carried by the tsunami landed on the seaward side of tree trunks as high as one metre above ground level. Unfortunately, the Islanders' limited harbor infrastructure sustained heavy damage as a result of the tsunami, which limited local fishing and trading activities¹².

2.2. The Population

In the mid-nineteenth century, the population of the Banyak Islands did not exceed "354" people, who lived in four villages (Tuangju, Talalu, Strohi, Rautan) and owned four *ladangs* (dry rice-fields), with between 5 and 15 houses each (Logan 1856: 14). Rosenberg's and Logan's lists of the tiny village populations in the 19th century are of course no longer applicable today, though the 2010 census reported that the Islands' total population still totals only 6,570 people. Only Tuangku and the small islands of Balai and Baguk, northeast of Tuangku, have significant populations. Two other major islands located on either side of Tuangku - Bangkuru, noted for its international surfing activities and green turtle sightings, and Ujung Batu, have been earmarked for future tourist development, which however has not successfully eventuated to date.

¹² References to the tsunami's effects on Kepulauan Banyak are found at: "Hundreds of quake victims on Banyak Islands". Asia News. 2005-03-30. Retrieved 16 December 2009.
U.S. Geological Survey (29 April, 2005): "USGS Scientists in Sumatra Studying Recent Tsunamis". Retrieved 16 December 2009.

Most people live on the three main islands: Pulau Balai, Pulau Ujung Batu, and Pulau Tuangku, the latter being the largest (see **Table 2.1**). The only town of any size is Pulau Balai (population 1,608), the capital of Kecamatan Kepulauan Banyak, though now that Haloban has become the capital of Kecamatan Kepulauan Banyak Barat, it is growing as new administrative buildings and homes are being established. There are only five other population centres, and they are of village size, including Pulau Baguk, Teluk Nibung, Asantola, Ujung Sialit and Suka Makmur. The seven centres are listed below, along with their *adat* territory or *kemukiman* (M., I.) names that were used in the former Tuangku kingdom, and their contemporary district names.

Tabel 2.1: The Seven Population Centres, their Island Locations, the former *Adat* (*kemukiman*) Territory Names, and the Current District (*Kecamatan*) Names in Kepulauan Banyak

No.	Village	Island	Former <i>Adat</i> Territories (<i>Kemukiman</i>)	District	
1	Pulau Balai	Pulau Balai	Pulau Salapan	Pulau Banyak	
2	Pulau Baguk	Pulau Baguk			
3	Teluk Nibung	Pulau Ujung Batu			
4	Haloban	Pulau Tuangku		Pulau Banyak Barat	
5	Asantola				
6	Ujung Sialit				
7	Suka Makmur				

The small settlement at Pulau Baguk has a population of 1,358, while Teluk Nibung (Nibung Bay) has 950. Of the four population centres in Kecamatan Pulau Banyak Barat, Haloban has 803 inhabitants, Asantola has 582, Ujung Sialit (“Point Sialit”) has 1,093, and Suka Makmur has 169.¹³

¹³ The population statistics in the above paragraphs are based on the following sources: <aceh.bps.go.id>, retrieved 4 June 2011, and “Statistik Daerah Kecamatan Pulau Banyak,” 2015, <<https://acehsingkilkab.bps.go.id/Publikasi/view/id/76>> from the Biro Pusat Statistik (Central Statistics Office), Jakarta, 2011, retrieved 4 December, 2011.



Figure 2.1: External and internal views of the marketplace in Haloban, where women and men sell their produce, photo: October 2014.

2.3. Religion

In 1811, Marsden noted that “the inhabitants of these islands... are now Mahometans” (Marsden 1811 (1986): 4790). Logan also wrote that according to William Marsden and Rosenberg, “the Baniak Islands....Maruwi people...were of Niasan-Polynesian heritage, and like other “maritime tribes” in the archipelago “have adopted the dress and religion of the Malays” and were “all Mahomedans” except for one (Christian) priest (Logan 1856: 14). Today the Islanders are still predominantly Muslim, though the approximately 1,200 inhabitants of the village of Ujung Sialit on Pulau Tuangku are Christian, originally having migrated from a Protestant area of the island of Nias to the south.

2.4. Livelihoods

As we have noted (Rosenberg, 1884), in the nineteenth century the Islanders produced coconuts, sago, *durian*, *nangka* fruit, *pinang/betel nut*, *nipah* palm fruit, bamboo, rattan, timber from forest trees, corn/*ubi* (edible roots, sweet potato), *kaladi*, *glaga* (wild sugar cane or grasses), rice from the paddy fields, as well as several varieties of fish and shellfish. Most of these foods are still produced, though rice is normally imported these days.

The adult male population in the Islands are mostly fishermen who use their own individual small boats, though some have multi-hulled *perahu*, but the limited harbour facilities and tsunami damage are still hindering the development of trading activities to this day. Some are farmers, but their farming activities are insufficient to supply their needs, and a significant quantity of fresh food has to be brought in from Singkil.¹⁴

Others are small-scale traders, or in Pulau Balai and Haloban, government officials. The women are mostly involved with home duties, selling their farm produce in the marketplace, or teaching.

Local entrepreneurship is severely limited by the lack of infrastructure, including harbour development, basic properly constructed roads between population centres, and a reliable power supply. The electricity supply to homes and other public services is very limited in villages such as Teluk Nibung, pictured below.



Figure 2.2: A view of houses with limited electricity supply in Teluk Nibung village.
Figure 2.3: A motorbike, the only form of land transport in Teluk Nibung village.

Clearly the Islanders' economic development will continue to struggle until sufficient new infrastructure facilities are constructed.

¹⁴ See Norman van Hoff, 7 May, 2005. "A Preliminary Assessment of Damage, Losses, Needs, Dangers, Opportunities, and Local Aspirations - Pulau Banyak (Banyak Islands (PDF))". Retrieved 16 December, 2009.

Attempts since the early 2000s by government and a community-run, private Foundation (Yayasan Pulau Banyak)¹⁵ to develop tourism were inspired by the Islands' population of beautiful green turtles that were being protected by the Foundation, substantial offshore coral reefs, excellent surfing opportunities, traditional music and dance performances, and good supply of seafood by local fisherfolk. The people have been collecting turtle eggs for their own consumption; and poachers from Sibolga have been caught exploiting hunting turtles for the lucrative export market in turtle meat, while other species in danger from overharvesting include the giant clams and the dugong turtles.¹⁶

In 2010, hopes were raised that the Islanders' infrastructure needs would at last be recognised by government as a result of the publicity generated by the ambitious Green Turtle Festival held in June that year, sponsored by the Foundation and the government. However, it failed to attract many tourists, and the performances by local traditional dancers and musicians and invited pop and TV stars from Jakarta were enjoyed by the local population and only a sprinkling of tourists. It is hoped that a Festival and promotion of the Islands' natural habitat and tourism planned for December 2017 will be able to attract more general interest and visits to the Islands (see Chapter IX).

2.5. The Natural Habitat and Tourism

As the Yayasan Pulau Banyak have pointed out, the region supports a variety of habitats including coral reefs and mangroves and is a marine protected area with Recreation Park/Multiple Use Management Area status (*Taman Wisata Alam*)¹⁷. In 1997, it set up an environmental programme which aims to study, conserve and increase the awareness of the region's anthropological and biological diversity (Steeman 1997). One of its main roles is

¹⁵ Yayasan Pulau Banyak's environmental programme is centred in Banda Aceh.

¹⁶ See Down to Earth, <dte@gn.apc.org. Retrieved 2 June, 2012.

¹⁷ The information in these paragraphs derives from the YPB Foundation's website at <<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/archives/mtn90/mtn90p6.shtml>>.

monitoring the green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) at Pulau Bangkaru, where green turtles nest in large numbers, especially at Amandangan beach which extends approximately 1.3 kilometres along the exposed western coast of Pulau Bangkaru and is the main nesting site in the archipelago. Sporadic nesting also occurs on other smaller beaches in the archipelago¹⁸. Green, hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) turtles nest there and are protected by Governmental Decrees (Siswomartono 1997); in fact, sea turtles nest at many locations in Sumatra but recent information on turtles nesting in Sumatra is very limited (YPB website).

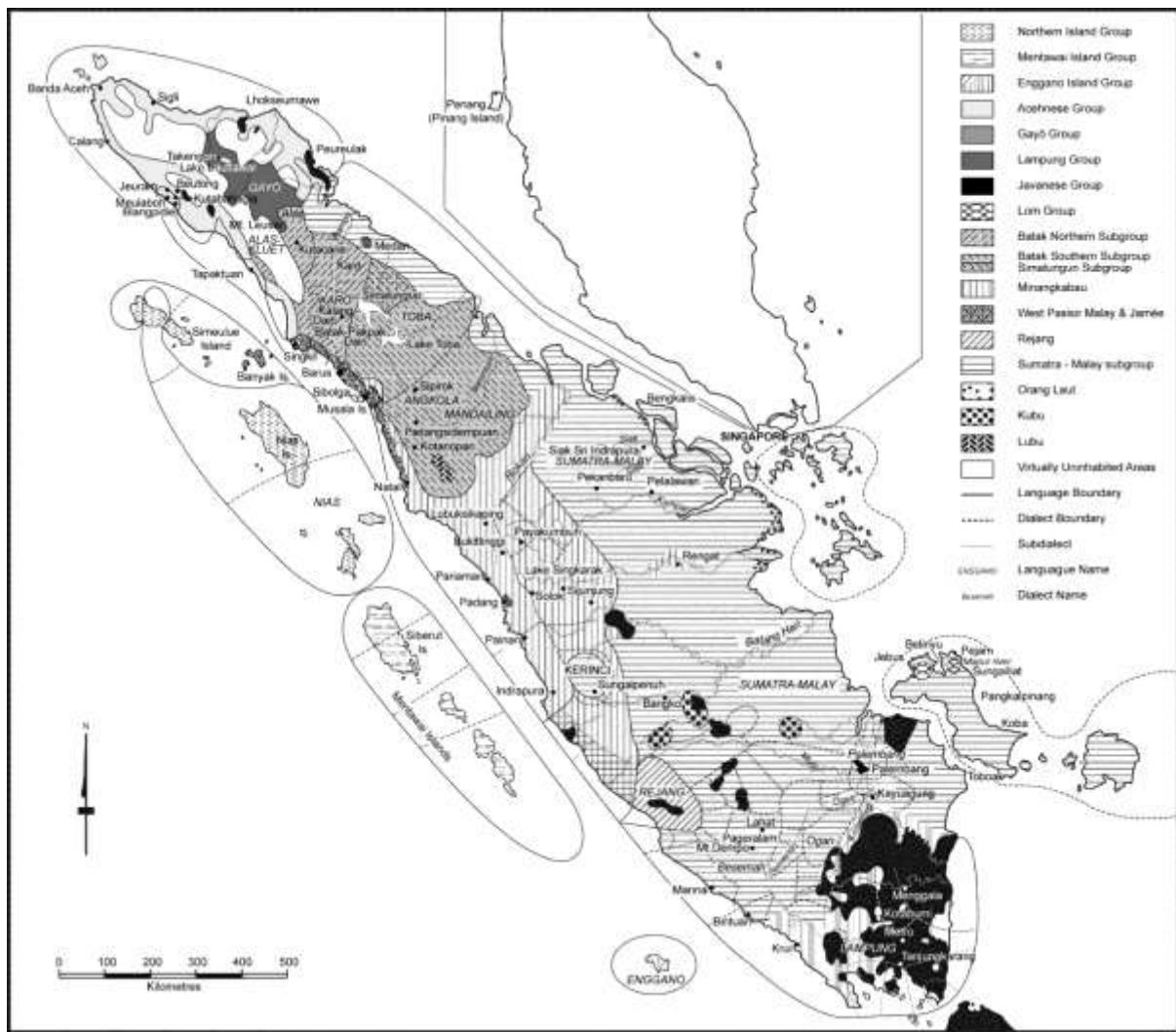
Besides, problems with overharvesting of sea turtles¹⁹, external fishing by ocean trawlers, damage from explosives, and recent geological disturbances have limited and threatened the Islands' underwater resources, and the living standards of the village population have shown no signs of improving in the years I have been visiting Kepulauan Banyak.

2.6. A Classification of the Islanders' Ethno-Lingual Groups and Musical Arts in their West-Coast Sumatran Context

Map 2.3. below (first published in Kartomi 2012: 4) shows the ethno-lingual groups and subgroups in the whole of Sumatra, including Kepulauan Banyak and west-coastal Sumatran groups, and the location of Kepulauan Banyak (circled in red) in relation to the Sumando/Melayu Jamu Pasisir and Jamée groups and subgroups (see shaded areas) living in west-coastal Aceh and North Sumatra.

¹⁸ Green turtles nest year around on Amandangan beach and the peak nesting time coincides with the dry eastern monsoon from November to May. Between 16 February and 6 March, 1999 (dry eastern monsoon), nightly emergences averaged between 7 and 8. A minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 clutches were laid each night during this period, with an overall nesting success of 58 %. In 1997, data were collected during both the eastern and western monsoons, and ranged from 3 to 13 nests per night (Steeman 1997).

¹⁹ See Norman van Hoff, 5 July 2005. "A Preliminary Assessment of Damage, Losses, Needs, Dangers, Opportunities, and Local Aspirations - Pulau Banyak (Banyak Islands)". Retrieved 16 December, 2012.



Map 2.3: The shaded area shows the Malay-speaking groups and sub-groups including the Melayu Jamu Pasisir, Melayu Jamu Pulo, and Jamée sub-groups on Sumatra's west coast (Kartomi 2012: 4)

The Melayu Jamu Pasisir people's marriage rituals, which are in some cases combined with Batak and other inland traditions to facilitate intermarriage, are also known to be governed by by the umbrella term: *Adat Sumando Menyumando*,²⁰ which means *Adat Besan Berbesan* (lit. newly established family ties). The term *Adat Sumando* is also used to identify the mixed *perantau* (immigrants) who settled over the generations along Sumatra's west coast between

²⁰ Re “Adat Sumando Menyumando”, see Bahri Rangkayo Mulia. *Indoculture Online*, 9 September 2015, retrieved 18 September, 2009, <https://indoculture.wordpress.com/2009/09/18/499/>.

Singkil and Natal, including the Minangkabau, Batak Mandailing and Batak Toba subgroups, the Bugis, and others. (The term Sumando can also mean “son in law” in a Melayu Pasisir Barat family). The traditional customs (*adat*) of the Sumando ethno-lingual group were given formal colonial recognition by the Administrator of the local Dutch Residency in Sibolga (Colonel Conprus) on March 1, 1851 (see Manalu 2012).

2.7. The Urang Pulo’s Ethno-Lingual Groups and Speech Varieties

The people who live along the northwest coast of mainland Sumatra call the Kepulauan Banyak people Urang Pulo (lit. “Islanders”); and they designate their culture by the term Jamu Pulo, where Jamu [lit. “guests”] refers to immigrants in the Islands). This includes their oral lore, music, dance, customs and traditional Animist beliefs in the spirits of nature and the ancestors, as well as their distinctive native speech variety, called Bahasa Jamu Pulo (‘Islander language’), Bahasa Melayu Pulo (“Islander Malay”), or Bahasa Jamu Pulo (“Jamu Islander language”). Bahasa Jamu Pasisir (or Melayu Pasisir), on the other hand, refers to a cluster of west-coastal Sumatran speech varieties. Some Islanders also speak a variety of Bahasa Nias/Ono Niha (the language of Nias), especially in Kampung Sialit on Pulau Tuangku, while others also have a limited knowledge of Acehnese. Of course, they also write and speak Bahasa Indonesia.

However, there is another ancient language that was referred to by Marsden (1811/1966: 478-479) and by Rosenberg (see Logan 1856: 13ff)²¹, and is spoken today by the people in Haloban and the neighbouring village of Anatola on Pulau Tuangku – and not on the other islands. Marsden and Rosenberg/Logan called it Bahasa Maruwi, and Marsden wrote that it was also spoken in the Nako-nako archipelago to the west of Nias (Marsden ibid.). It is known today as Bahasa Haloban or its ancient name of Bahasa Lingbano, and is still used in the lyrics of

²¹ Rosenberg presented a lengthy linguistic discussion of the Maruwi language, but it only included the phonology and a list of words and did not include the study of sentences.

Haloban's sacred *adok* song-dance, though mixed with some Jamu Polo words (see Chapter VII). As intimated above, the Islanders' primal ancestors are believed to be from Haloban (originally known as Kampung Tulalit, see Chapter III)²², and they spoke a unique native language.

In mid-2016, Robert Amery (professor of linguistics at the University of Adelaide) led a research team of linguists to Pulau Tuangku and Simeulue to study the language relationships, and concluded that Bahasa Haloban is most closely related to Bahasa Devayan which is spoken in the south of Pulau Simeulue. The team also discovered that both Bahasa Haloban and the languages of Pulau Simeulue are much more closely related to Bahasa Nias than to other languages in Aceh Province. In addition, they found some linguistic evidence to strongly suggest that the main direction of migration has been from Pulau Nias to Pulau Simeulue and not the other way around, and that Haloban may have received a back migration from Pulau Simeulue. Confirmation of these discoveries will be made in forthcoming publications (pers. comm., Robert Amery).

2.8. Speech Varieties in Neighbouring Areas

On the island of Nias, both the Muslim and Christian inhabitants speak not only the local Ono Niha languages but also the Kepulauan Banyak speech variety of Melayu Jamu, which was brought there by immigrants from Kepulauan Banyak, and other speech varieties from Simeulue, Kepulauan Batu, and Sibolga, the capital of the Tapanuli Tengah district of North Sumatra Province. In the port city of Sibolga, which lies between Singkil and Natal and the midpoint of the cross-cultural interface between Nias, Kepulauan Batu, Simeulue, Kepulauan Banyak and Sumatra's west coast, the people speak the following languages: Acehnese,

²² This information was gleaned from my interviews with Bapak Misri Caniago, Bapak Anhar Sitanggang and the Mukim during my field trips in 2010, 2013, and 2014. They also told me what they knew of the undocumented history of the Tuangku Kingdom on Pulau Tuangku.

Minangkabau, Bengkulu, Riau-Malay, South Sumatran-Malay, Jambi-Malay and Lampung language, while the west-coast Sumatran's in Sorkam, Barus, Singkil, and Natal sub-districts and regencies also speak their own dialects of Bahasa Jamu, i.e. Bahasa Pasisir, Bahasa Nias, Bahasa Jamu (also known as Bahasa Aneuk Jamee²³ or Bahasa Pasisir), Baso Minang (lit. the Minangkabau language) and Bahasa Pakpak (one of the six Batak sub-languages).²⁴ All the Malay ethno-lingual groups along west-coastal Sumatra, including the Urang Pulo, Urang Pasisir, and the Niasans, also of course speak Bahasa Indonesia.

2.9. Classification of the Islanders' Musical Arts and Muslim Devotional Exercises in their West Coastal Sumatran Context

I shall now discuss my classification of the Kepulauan Banyak musical arts and Muslim devotional exercises (which the *ulama* say are not to be called “music”) that are sung in the various speech varieties discussed above, especially Melayu Jamu Pulo (islander Malay) and - in Haloban and Asantola, the classical Haloban language or a combination of the Melayu Jamu Pulo and Haloban speech varieties.

The musical arts and intoned Muslim devotional exercises in the Islands may be divided into the (i) male and female solo singing genres, (ii) singing genres with instrumental accompaniment, (iii) dances with instrumental accompaniment, (iv) song-dances that combine singing with dance movement, and (v) song-dances with instrumental accompaniment.

The chart in **Table 2.2.** summarises the whole music- culture, including the special case of the former court centre at Haloban, which includes the song-dances *tari adok* and *tari langser* that are not performed elsewhere. The term *sikambang* on the left of the chart refers to all songs

²³ The Acehnese term Jamée is an abbreviation of ‘Aneuk Jamée’ which literally means “children of the guests” (Durie, 1985; Asyik, 1987), which refers to the many west-coast guest workers who settled there over the centuries and developed their own speech variety called Jamée.

²⁴ Bahasa Pakpak is spoken by Christian Batak Pakpak communities living among Muslim Malay communities on Sumatra’s west coast and the highland Bukit Barisan (Dividing Range) that forms a natural boundary with the coastal area of Pasisir Barat.

and dances that include male or female singing in the traditional, loudly-carrying, melismatic *sikambang* singing style, but not, of course, to the intoned Muslim arts such as *dikie* and *kasidah*, which may involve singing texts influenced by Arabic culture.

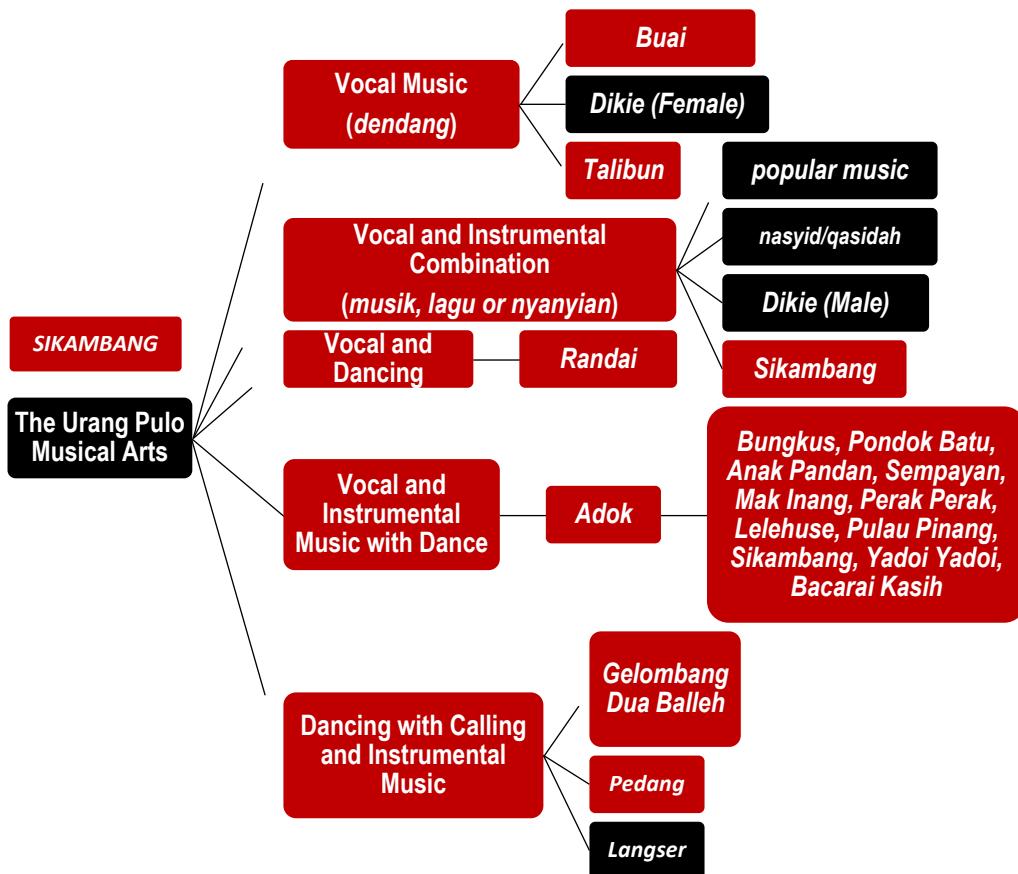


Table 2.2: Classification of the Musical Arts of the Urang Pulo

As the chart indicates, the Urang Pulo musical arts, which are called by the umbrella term *sikambang*, comprise five categories: They are (i) the vocal music/*dendang*, comprising the *buai* (lullaby), *talibun* (bardic intoning) and *dikie perempuan* (women's Muslim *dikie* singing), (ii) the vocal and instrumental music comprising *sikambang* singing with *biola* and *gandang* playing, *dikie laki* (men's *zikir* singing with *gandang* playing), *nasyid/main rebana* (men's singing of mainly religious texts with frame drum playing) and popular music (with pop band playing) (iii) the vocal music with dancing, including the *randai* dances in *baralek* processions with *gandang* playing) (iv) the vocal and instrumental music with dance, including the sacred

Tari Adok and the couples dances: *Bungkus*, *Pondok Batu*, *Anak Pandan*, *Sampayan*, *Mak Inang*, *Perak-Perak*, *Lelehusen*, *Pulau Pinang*, *Siantung*, *Sikambang*, *Yadoi-Yadoi* and *Bacarai Kasih* (B.M.: *Bercerai Kasih*), and (v) instrumental music and dancing with a caller, including the *Gelombang Duabaleh* (“twelve waves”), *Padang* (“sword”) and *Langser* dances with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment.

Apart from the dances of Minangkabau origin listed above, namely: *Tari Randai*, *Tari Gelombang Duobaleh* and *Tari Padang*, the following chapters will explain and discuss all these genres in detail. As noted in Chapter I, the Islanders’ popular music will be dealt with in a future publication and will be excluded here.

2.10. Music in Daily Life among the People of Haloban – an Anecdote

Figure 2.4 below show some musical activities that I observed happen on most days in Haloban. They include (i) some primary school children whom I heard sing children’s songs (a topic for future research), (ii) fisherman who sews their traditional fishing net while he listens to *lagu Melayu* on the radio, and (iii) a group of *gandang* players rehearsing for their performance at an upcoming wedding in Haloban.



Figures 2.4: Daily life among Bahasa Jamu Pulo-speaking Urang Pulo (i) children, (ii) a fisherman is sewing his fishing net, and (iii) *gandang* players rehearsing in Haloban village, Pulau Banyak Barat District, Pulau Tuangku, 2014

here are radios but not many television sets yet in Haloban, nor is there a reliable electricity supply to allow the people to play recordings on electronic devices whenever they wish to. On

the other hand, when women and children sell food and drink in the streets they sing street songs. I was intrigued on my third field trip to hear a group of *sekolah dasar* (primary school) boys and girls in school uniform walking around the village of Haloban from 5 to 7.30am singing the following ditty as they sold dozens of cakes for 1000 Rupiah each, with the girls carrying the cakes on their heads. They sang:

*Martabak... saribu sabuah
Inukut... saribu sabuah
Keik loput... seribu sabuah*

*Martabak... a thousand for each
Inukut... a thousand for each
Keik loput... a thousand for each*

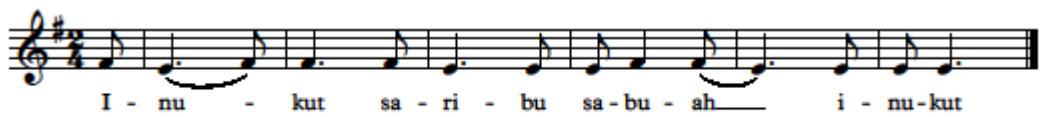


Figure 2.5: A school girl singing a street song as she sells cakes in a basket on her head in Haloban Village

After school, the boys and girls repeated the exercise between 1 and 5.30pm, this time selling ice cups and noodles for 500 Rupiah each while singing the phrases to the same melody:

*Es cangkir... lima ratus sabuah Ice jelly... five hundred for each
Bakwan...lima ratus sabuah Bakwan (noodles)... five hundred for each*

Transcription 2.1: A ditty sung by children selling cakes, or by women selling vegetables while they walk around the village in Kepulauan Banyak



On that day, I also noticed that the same two-tone melody was sung by children in Pulau Balai as well, and that women also sang the street song while walking around selling vegetables in baskets carried on their heads.

2.11. Conclusion

As will become clear in the chapters below, the physical, economic and human geography of the Islands, including the 2004 and other earthquakes and tsunamis, has affected the degree to which the people have been able to devote themselves to their sacred arts and rituals and the respects they believe must be paid to the ancestors since the early 2000s. The above classification of their arts into many ritual and entertainment genres shows how complex their musical lives once were, and how the dilemmas they face today as they try to maintain at least the essential vestiges of the traditional practices and respect for the ancestral arts can be resolved.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ISLANDERS' MUSICAL HISTORY IN THEIR SUMATRAN CONTEXT

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I propose that the history of the Islands and their musical arts from the early days of the Tuangku kingdom through colonial and post-colonial times can usefully be divided into eight periods, based on the very few existing colonial-era references and my discussions with elders, village men and women, and artists in Haloban, Asantola, Sialit, Natal, Singkil, Barus, Jago-jago, Sibolga, Padang, Saniang Baka and Pagaruyung. First however, I discuss the need to view the music-culture in its Sumatran context, draw together the scattered historical data on the Banyak Islanders in their Sumatran west-coast context, outline and discuss the Urang Pulo's origin legend, and in the Conclusion, briefly ruminate about why the Haloban court's very existence is so little known outside the Islands.

3.2. The Islanders' Music-Culture in its Sumatran Context.

The Islanders' mostly undocumented history needs to be seen in connection to that of west-coastal Sumatra's. Over the past millennium or more, the ports of Barus and Singkil on Sumatra's northwest coast were frequently visited by merchants from Arabia, China, India, Portugal, Britain and Holland, who imported quantities of camphor, herbs and spices from the area (Andaya, 2004: 146-172). Their informal interactions with the local people gradually shaped the local culture and arts. The visiting ships included the Portuguese during the century of their Southeast Asian empire, from 1511 to 1641, who probably brought European renaissance-era violas, violins to the region, and the violin (*biola*) became a permanent fixture in Kepulauan Banyak and other areas of Sumatra and beyond. The Urang Pulo and the Jamu Pasisir Malays are also related to the so-called Jamée subgroup who speak a Malay-Acehnese

patois and occupy Aceh's west coastal areas from Singkil north to Calang²⁵ (Kartomi 2012: 2-6; 217-18).

In some ways, the Islanders' and some of the traditional dances on PB are quite unique. The Islanders also perform musical and dance genres from Simeulue and Nias and sing in those local languages.

Above all, the Islanders say, they have close family and trade links with the people in Barus, because the seasonal sea currents and winds naturally take their *prahus* there. Indeed, except for their unique *adok* dance, their performing arts tend to resemble those of Barus and other nearby west-coastal Sumatran towns, though their styles of performance and ritual contexts differ. The Islanders also believe their ancestors were connected to the two mixed Malay-Batak courts at Barus until their demise in the late 19th century (see Drakard ([1988] 2003)²⁶. The people in Barus speak a Malay-Batak patois which differs somewhat from the Islanders' Jamu speech varieties, but their ceremonial *sikambang asli* and *buai* vocal music resembles much of the Islanders' *sikambang* repertoire, including both its solo and its accompanied vocal music and instrumental genres, and they both perform similar Malay couples dances with *joget*-style movements, rhythms, and tempo (see Chapter VII). In addition, they both enjoy *gandang* and *biola* ensemble music, the latter instrument apparently having been introduced to the region by the Portuguese from Melaka during their colony in 1511-1641 (see Kartomi 2012: 221-250). And both peoples' Muslim leaders also taught and promoted devotional Muslim singing of *dikie* devotions and *qasidah/kasidah* singing and Qur'an reading.

²⁵ The terms Jamu and Jamée both literally mean "guests", "newcomers."

²⁶ That royal life events at Barus were celebrated with a mix of "Batak, Malay, Arab, Hindu, and Islamic traditions (see the translation of the royal *Asal* Barus Chronicle in Drakard ([1988] 2003: 161) shows Barus' cosmopolitan character in colonial times.

The Islanders also have an emotional, ancestral link with the former court of Pagaruyung in the highlands (*darek*) of West Sumatra, which met its demise in the early nineteenth century. The two peoples both venerate Pagaruyung's legendary queen Bundo Kanduang and hero Cindue Mato, whose names are mentioned in the Islanders' sacred *adok* dance song. And the Islanders perform their versions of Pagaruyung's martial *randai* and *gelombang duabelas* dances in their processions around the village at weddings and other celebrations. The Islanders' legendary first *raja* who was appointed by the Sultan of Pagaruyung to set up the petty kingdom of Haloban²⁷ may have been responsible for transplanting these two dances into the Islands, though of course regular west coastal *perantau* may just as feasibly have brought the genres with them when they settled in the Islands.

Thus, most of the people of the Kepulauan Banyak archipelago are a mix of Sumatran Malays of Batak and Minangkabau descent who migrated from the west Pasisir Malaya coast between Singkil and Natal, while some are from Simeulue and surrounding islands to the north and from Nias to the south. Their music culture reflects the mixed/*kacukan* nature of their population, as the colonial-era sources briefly mention.

3.3. Review of the Colonial-Era Sources

The oldest available source that mentions the Islands is by the English writer William Marsden in his *The History of Sumatra*, published in 1811 (Marsden 1811/1986: 478-479). However, this book contains only two paragraphs on the Islands and nothing on the arts. Marsden reported that “the Maros or Orang Maruwi” of “Pulo Baniak” (Baniak Islands) mainly produce “sea-slugs and the edible birds’ nest... Their language... is considered by the natives of these parts

²⁷ None of the historians and anthropologists of Sumatra whom I asked for references about the former court at Haloban knew of its very existence. Presumably this is because the Dutch *kontroleurs* (administrators) in Singkil did not have had a good relationship with the *rajas* from whom they collected the people’s taxes after the 1860s. Colonial military activity in Aceh was being built up from the 1870s to the Dutch-Aceh war (1883-1910) so they could no longer send colonial officials or scholars such as Rosenberg to the Islands. Besides, the Islands are out of the way of travellers, who even today need to reserve four hours for speed boat voyage to the islands.

as distinct and peculiar” (Marsden, 1811: 478-479). He also commented on a few surrounding islands including the Nako-Nako island cluster, about which he wrote:

The islands are governed by a single *raja*, who monopolises the produce, his subjects dealing only with him, and he with the praus or country vessels, who are regularly furnished with cargoes in the order of their arrival, and never dispatched out of turn (Marsden 1811/1986: 478).

According to my interlocutors at Haloban, this comment could also have applied to the succession of *rajas* in the kingdom of Tuangku with its centre at Haloban at the time Marsden was writing, though Marsden did not of course have access to any data on the Haloban court.

A Dutch surveyor of the Banyak Archipelago in the 1850s, H. van Rosenberg, wrote a long article about the “Baniak Islands”, including a little about the *raja* of the Islanders’ Tuangku kingdom, whom he referred to as the Tuangku (lit. “My lord”). In 1856 the English geographer J.R. Logan also wrote an article titled “The Maruwi of the Pulo Baniak: Ethnology of the Indo-Pacific Islands, Comparative Vocabularies etc.” (Logan 1856, 1-42), but it is based almost entirely on his translation of Rosenberg’s article of 1854²⁸. He wrote that Rosenberg’s article is the only “account of the Pulo Baniak and their islets” to date, and that otherwise, our knowledge of “the most northerly of the West Sumatran insular tribes, the principal group of whom was the Maruwi on Si Malu or Pulau Babi islets”, would be “scanty”.

Among other matters he wrote that the Tuangku claimed to be a descendant of the sultan of Pagaruyung’s family and that he ruled through the *datuk* (elders) in the villages:

[The Baniak Islanders’] ...Chief Authority was the Tuwanku of Great Baniak who resides in Kampong Tuwanku. Under him are Datus of whom there are in some cases 5 or 6 in the same kampong...the present Tuwanku, who is a very old man, holds

²⁸ The 1856 article by J R Logan on the “The Maruwi of the Baniak Islands: Ethnology of the Indo-Pacific Islands, Comparative Vocabularies etc.” is published in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* and is on line at: http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=eXMEAAAAQAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP14&dq=The+Maruwi+of+the+Baniak+Islands&ots=y-5MCFCN8j&sig=GBs2Tiw-g0ZqTpaJwTPID8qI_f4#v=onepage&q=The%20Maruwi%20of%20the%20Baniak%20Islands&f=false

himself to be a descendant of the earlier royal family of Menangkabau, his grandfather having come from Pagar-rugong (sic) and married a woman of Nias (Logan 1986: 13).

These little-known facts about the Islanders' succession of kings at Haloban basically tally with the kingdom's origin legend, as will be explained below. The intermarriage with women from Nias that he noted has also been not uncommon, and there is a whole village of Nias descendants at Desa Sialit near Haloban today.

Rosenberg also wrote that the Islanders – and presumably their *raja* - came under the control of the Dutch when they took Singkil during the long Aceh war from 1883 to 1910. Thus, he wrote (quoted here in Logan's English translation): "With Singkel, the Baniak Islands fell under the dominion of the Dutch". Reportedly, he continued, the Islanders' population remained small, but they grew their own rice and vegetables and kept their own livestock, and most were fishermen who also collected other sea produce for their own consumption and a small export trade. The people at Haloban received visits from passing boats travelling to and from west-coast Sumatran ports such as Singkil, Barus and Sibolga and the neighbouring islands of Nias to the south and Simeulue to the north.

Rosenberg wrote many pages about the phonology and vocabulary of the Urang Pulo's ancient "Maruwi" – actually Lingbano²⁹ - language and added that as the "Pulo Baniak" people spoke the language of Nias in addition to Maruwi, there must have been much intermixture of Maruwi, Niasans, west-coastal Sumatrans (who are now known as Jamu) and other ethnic groups in the Islands. I shall leave Rosenberg's linguistic discussion in Logan's article to the linguists, noting only that it did not include the study of sentences but only the phonology, and proposed that he thought the language derived from Niasan-Polynesian.

²⁹ The Haloban elders say that their unique ancient language (*bahasa kuno*) is Lingbano, though today they refer to their current speech variety as being a combination of Bahasa Lingbano and Bahasa Melayu Jamu Pulo.

He also described some aspects of the Islands' geography and commented on the people's ethnicity, economic activities and religious beliefs. Stressing the lack of prior studies of the "Pulo Baniak" people, he wrote that the people's "ancient history must be drawn from the ethnology" (Rosenberg 1854: 14). He concluded that as the "Pulo Baniak" people spoke the language of Nias in addition to the ancient Maruwi language, that there must have been considerable intermixing of Maruwi, Niasan, and west-coastal Sumatrans and other ethnic groups, a conclusion that is clearly borne out in the music-culture of the Banyak Islands to this day.

Near the end of his article, Logan wrote: 'With Singkel, the Baniak Islands fell under the dominion of the Dutch'. Reportedly the population of the Islands remained small, but the Islanders grew their own rice and vegetables and kept their own livestock, most were fishermen who also collected other sea produce for their own consumption and a small export trade, and the people at Haloban received visits from passing boats travelling to and from west-coast Sumatran ports such as Singkil, Barus and Sibolga and the neighbouring islands of Nias to the south and Simeulue to the north.

The above authors did not of course comment on the music and dance. However my data suggests that the specific musical, dance, martial art and bardic art genres that developed in the villages and court at Haloban were unique in the Banyak Islands at large, the evidence lying in the fact that performances of similar genres in villages on other islands such as Teluk Nibung on Pulau Ujung Batu and in Pulau Balai town on Pulau Balai are stylistically quite different, as will be explained in the chapters below.

Why is it that scholars, including historians and anthropologists, of Sumatra are unaware of the former Haloban court's existence? Some other Sumatran courts are known through their local belletristic literature, local historians' writings, and the reports of colonial-era *kontroleurs*

(administrative officers). That they are lacking in Haloban's case is presumably because the Dutch *kontroleurs* in Singkil did not have had a good relationship with the *rajas* after the 1860s. Colonial military activity in Aceh was being built up from the 1870s to the Dutch-Aceh war (1883-1910) so they could no longer send colonial officials or scholars such as Rosenberg to the Islands. Besides, the Islands are out of the way of travellers, who even today need to reserve four hours for speed boat voyage to the islands.

I shall now discuss the oral reports and legends detailing the cultural memory of the origin and history of the royal centre and its arts in Haloban, which will greatly expand and fill out the above dated comments by Western writers.

3.4. The Origin Legend and Oral History of the Royal Court in Haloban and its Arts

Possibly around two and a half centuries ago,³⁰ as the oral literature details and Logan's/Rosenberg's colonial report of 1888 peripherally mentions, the council of elders (*datuk*) on Tuangku Island decided to send one of their number to lead a delegation to meet the Sultan of Pagaruyung to request that a royal prince be sent to Haloban (also called Aloban³¹) to set up court and rule. One *datuk* reportedly travelled to Pagaruyung in the central mountains at West Sumatra mountains and accompanied the prince back to Haloban where he and his various generations of descendants ruled until the mid-20th century (pers. comm., royal Haloban descendant, Mr. Masri Caniago in Haloban, 2013). Between the 14th and 19th centuries, Sumatra's west-coastal Malay-speaking peoples and the Bataks and the Nias descendants in the present-day provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra, Bengkulu and beyond held the king of Pagaruyung in very high respect (see Andaya 2004). The sultanate was heavily

³⁰ The royal family trees (*silsilah*) name a succession of eight *rajas* of Haloban, and if we calculate an average of thirty years for each generation, we must conclude that the incumbency of the first *raja* dates from the second half of the eighteenth century.

³¹ *Aloban* is the name of a species of timber that was used to build the homes in the first settlement on Tuangku Island.

involved in trade with the many visiting merchant ships from China, India, and the Middle East. Sumatra's west coast palaces, especially the ports of Barus and Sibolga, ran the lucrative trade in local goods that were highly valued in China, India, the Middle East and from the 15th century CE, Europe, including camphor (*kapur Barus*), cloves and other spices, timber, and rice. Interactions between the locals and foreign traders, who often stayed in the ports for months awaiting favourable winds, also led in many cases to interactions between or marriages with members of local ethno-lingual groups (such as the Bataks and Malays) themselves, and from the beginning of the colonial era in the sixteenth century, to cultural as well as commercial interactions with the Portuguese, English, and expanding Dutch colonial power.

Each *raja* or *sultan*-led community in the courts located along West Sumatra's west coast had their own origin stories which gave them a sense of identity and authority, and the kingdom on Tuangku Island was no exception. The legend, including the records of the descendants of royalty under the Indonesian government from the 1950s on, is told as follows:

3.4.1. The Legend of the Origin of Haloban and Kepulauan Banyak³²

The primal ancestor of the Banyak Archipelago was a man known as Tutuwoun or Tutaon. At first he settled with his family at Teluk Nibung on Ujung Batu Island, but on sailing around the archipelago, he found a more favourable site for his family home at Tulale on the largest island with the largest amount of arable land, the island which would eventually be called Tuangku (lit. "My Lord Island").

A few years later, a man named Lawowek, or Labuek,³³ arrived on a different part of the island from Sinabang on Simeulue Island and at the same time a man named Lasengak from Padang

³² The above account of the legend and royal successions is based on two sources: my interview in Singkil in 2014 with Bp Gunawan Sakti Alam, the son of Sultan Jainun Alam, who also showed me some of the family heirlooms, including photos of the *terombo* of *kerajaan* Tuangku that are with his nephew in Jakarta (see Figure 1), and Ayu Agusni who posted his blog at http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulau_Banyak_Aceh_Singkil (downloaded on 1 October, 2016)

³³ The names of the key players in the legend are different in different versions of the legend. The first alternate names and spellings given are according to Bp Misri Caniago and the second alternatives by Ayu Agusni.

Sidempuan also settled on Tuangku, and they quarrelled with each other as to who of them could rightly claim to be the first settler on the land and the privileges attached to being the pioneer. They fought a duel to settle their differences. Lawowek won, and Lasengak was forced to escape on his boat out to sea.

After observing the incident, Tutuwoun invited the two men to visit his home at Tulale, where his wife offered them a dish of boiled sweetcorn (*ubi rebus*) and he showed them over his well-established garden. The two men realised that Tutuwoun was in fact the first settler on the island, given the considerable amount of time it takes to grow a garden of vegetables. So, they stopped quarrelling and accepted Tutuwoun's invitation to build their homes near his at Tulale, thus forming the first village/*pemukiman* on the island.

Several months later the three men were sailing around the island and saw some smoke in the distance. On investigation, they saw a man on a bank of the Air Dingin ("Cold River") boiling water on an open fire, asked his name and learned that it was Hutabarat and that he was from Samosir Island in the middle of Lake Toba on mainland Sumatra. So, they invited him to build and settle in their *pemukiman* at Tulale and become its fourth member.

Sailing further around the island, they met another man on Aisakhu Island, and after discovering his name was Malikul Berayak and that he came from North Tapanuli, they invited him to join their village at Tulale as its fifth member. He was also a master of the martial arts.

One day the five men held a meeting (*musyawarah*) to discuss their increasingly complex situation and decided they should formed a council of elders (*datuk*), with each of the five men assuming a different set of responsibilities. Tutuwoun was in charge of agriculture, Lawowek of harbour activities and fishing, Lasengak of social affairs, Malikul Berayak of security on land and sea, and Hutabarat of the *adat* and ceremonial lives of the people.

However, it was still difficult to manage their increasingly complex lives. At another meeting the council of elders decided they needed a king/*raja* to lead and administer their affairs, and given that none of the five men wanted to be king, they chose one of their number – the Malikul Berayak - to sail across to the coast and travel upstream to meet the most highly respected sultan on Sumatra – the Sultan of Pagaruyung - in the mountains of West Sumatra, and ask him to appoint the future royal *raja* of the Tuangku kingdom.

So Malikul Berayak embarked on his long journey, and succeeded in meeting the sultan face to face. After humbly putting his request to the sultan, he was delighted with the royal decision to assign the task of establishing the kingdom to his youngest son, Sutan Malingkar Alam, The sultan presented his son with the treasured emblems of sovereignty (*pusaka* which would give him the authority to be king and appointed his entourage, including Malikul Kudus as the Imam Garang(prayer leader) and Malikul Berayak as military commander (*panglima*) to look after security matters, and commanded the party to travel to the Banyak Islands.

Soon after their arrival, Malingkar Alamin was installed as *raja*. He decided to expand the existing council of elders to include Malikul Kudus as the Imam Garang (prayer leader in charge of religious affairs), Malikul Berayak as the *khotip*/ administrative head, and the five *datuk*, namely: Tutuwoun (the pioneer) as the *datuk besar* (“great elder”), Lawowek as the *maha raja* (“great king”), Lasengak as the *datuk mudo* (“junior *datuk*”), and Hutabarat as the *datuk pamuncak* (“top *datuk*”).

After Sutan Malikul Berayak died a few years later he was succeeded by his son, who assumed the title of Sutan Malingkar Alam. He was succeeded by his son Sutan Mahmud, and three more generations of rajas: Sutan Marahamat, Sutan Setangkap Alam and Sutan Alam, with the latter – sixth *sutan*, ruling from ca. 1930 till the Japanese invasion in 1942-1945. In the late 1940s, he moved the centre of government from Haloban to Luan Bano Selatan, still on

Tuangku Island and then decided to move it back to Haloban (according to blog). Sutan Alam's son Jainun Alam was next in line, but because the son of Sutan Alam's sister, Sutan Umar, wanted to rule himself, he assumed the role with the elders' support, saying that Jainun Alam was too young, and he kept some of the *pusaka* in his family, and remained the Datuk until 1950 when he died. Some Haloban elders today refer to Sutan Umar as "the pretender Sutan",

But by 1945, the colonial era and World War II were over, and in 1949, the Dutch finally handed over sovereign power to the Indonesian government, which did not recognise local royalty, thus the dynasty came to an end.



Figure 3.1: Top left: The late Bp Gunawan Sakti Alam holding the *trombo* (family tree) red seal of the Tuangku *rajas* who descended from the first *raja*, the youngest son of the sultan of Pagaruyung in Sibolga on 24 October, 2014.

Middle top and bottom: Drawings by the late Bp Gunawan Sakti Alam based on the *trombo* of the Haloban *rajas* used to explain the Haloban *rajas* family tree.

Right: *Pusaka/heirlooms gifted to the rajas* of Haloban as shown by Bp Gunawan Sakti Alam in Sibolga on 24 October, 2014: (top) a Malay-style *pedang*/sword, an Acehnese *rencong*/dagger, and (bottom) a Pagaruyung-style *rencong* /dagger. Extreme right: Haloban-style carvings on the hilt of a *keris* (dagger).

The timing of the events in the legend is unclear, but if, as the storytellers contend, there were six generations of *rajas* and a seventh “pretender *raja*” in Haloban until 1950, and each new generation of *rajas* was appointed on average every 40 years, the Sultan of Pagaruyung may have appointed his youngest son to be the first *raja* in the Islands in ca. 1730, long before the demise of Pagaruyung in 1833. Thus, the second *sutan* may have been appointed in 1770, the third in 1810, the fourth in 1850, the fifth in 1890, the sixth *sutan*- Setangkai Alam – from 1930 till the Japanese Occupation in 1942, and finally the “pretender” Sutan Umar, who died in 1950.

My interview in Bukit Tinggi on October 1, 2014 with the current descendant of the Sultan of Pagaruyung - The Daulat yang Dipertuan Raja Alam Pagaruyung (**Figure 3.2**) confirmed that the *trombo* (B.H.) or *tambo* (B.M.) of Pagaruyung contains accounts of approaches being made to the sultan of Pagaruyung to send his sons or other relatives to become king in various parts of Sumatra and Malaysia/Negeri Sembilan. They included Palembang, Jambi, Merak Giri, Sungai Padu, Aceh Singkil, and Negeri Sembilan³⁴. Thus, as he told me, it is quite likely that the Sultan of Pagaruyung was requested to send his son to become the first *raja* of Tuangku at some time in the past.

³⁴ For example, the Sutan said in his reply to my question about the content of the *trombo* that the Sultan of Pagaruyung sent one prince to Aceh via Meulaboh and another to the court at Asahan on North Sumatra’s east coast: “... Salah satu Sultan dikirim ke Aceh melimpah ke Meulaboh dan sebahagian berpindah ke Batu Bara di Asahan.”

Figure 3.2: The Daulat yang Dipertuan Raja Alam Pagaruyung (second from the left) with the author (second from the right) and two of the Dipertuan's personnel. The Daulat's complete title is Sutan Haji Muhamad Taufiq Thaib Tuangku Mudo Mahkota Alam.



I shall now outline the Urang Pulo's musical history, dividing it into periods primarily according to political changes in the former kingdom and the colonial and post-colonial governments, which of course affect the level and quality of traditional music and dance performance among the people.

3.5. An Outline of the Urang Pulo's Musical History from the Tuangku Kingdom's Foundation to the Present

Based on my discussions with the elders, village men and women, and artists in Haloban, Asantola, Sialit, Natal, Singkil, Barus, Jago-jago, Sibolga, Padang, Saniang Baka and Pagaruyung, I have divided the history of the Urung Pulo's music-culture into seven periods.

The First Period dates approximately from the early 18th century when the five *datuk* on Tuangku Island are believed to have sent one of their number to the universally respected sultan of Pagaruyung and begged him to send a prince to rule the Urang Pulo and set up court, as mentioned in the origin legend presented above. The sultan's youngest son was sent with his entourage to the Islands bringing with him the knowledge of some Pagaruyung music and

dance forms and the Bundo Kanduang origin legend. On this basis Haloban's artists created the unique and sacred *adok* dance for the *adat*-based celebrations of local weddings and circumcisions, with song lyrics that mention the Bundo Kanduang legend. The artists also developed their own baby thanksgiving rituals with *dendang sikambang*-style lullabies and dances to celebrate the birth of a baby. Meanwhile, the Urang Pulo were still participating in the sailing and trading activities with the people at the twin courts at Barus with whom they had close affinity, partly through two-way *merantau* activity and intermarriage³⁵, and they developed their own versions of Barus' (and perhaps other centres') couples dances with *joget* steps and hops accompanied by a singer of (i) slow, romantic *dendang sikambang* and (ii) fast, lively songs that could, if the artists wished, be accompanied by a *biola* and *gandang* frame drums.

The Second Period dates from ca. 1883 until 1942 when the Japanese invaded and the Dutch colonial period ended. The Dutch military was beginning to gain control of Aceh and its offshore islands from ca. the 1870s and fought the Dutch-Aceh war from 1833 to 1910. Haloban, the capital of the islands, was administratively part of the Singkel regency of the Netherlands East Indies, with the Dutch colonial administration receiving taxes from the Haloban court and people, but it is remembered as a relatively prosperous period. Some Islanders sailed to Barus, Sibolga, and even as far as Penang Island off the coast of Malaya to sell their goods and return with new clothes, salt and other luxuries. This era is captured in the *pantuns* of the Pulau Pinang song that accompanies the umbrella dance/*tari paying*, which is still so popular when danced by mixed primary school children in the Islands. The extensive

³⁵ Barus was certainly an important international port for exporting camphor. Thus, in 1512-1515 the Portuguese trader Tome Pires wrote about the “very rich kindom of Baros, which [was] also called Panchur or Pansur.... [it was] bounded by Tico on one side and on the other side by the kingdom of Singkel” (Cortesao [1944] 1976, 1;161-62, and later its dual courts were quite powerful (Drakard 1982: 78).

local repertoire of ritual and entertainment songs and dances together with the martial arts and the *talibun* bardic tradition continued to be performed at ceremonies until the war

The *Third Period*, from 1942-1949, included the Second World War and continuation of the Indonesian War of Independence. Although the Japanese invaders never set foot in the Islands, their control of the land and the sea lanes meant that the Islanders could no longer trade with the coastal Sumatran ports and visit the island of Penang, and they could consume only what they produced themselves. It was a time of extreme poverty, with the Islanders postponing their life event celebrations and with little opportunity to practice and perform the music and dance.

The *Fourth Period* dates from 1949-1966. This period was also one of poverty, but the practice of the traditional culture resumed with families helping each other present their weddings, circumcisions and other life events in *gotong royong* fashion. The elders presided at communal rituals and made sure the ancestral *adat* rules were kept, bards intoned the *nandung* and *sikambang* legends, women sang their children to sleep with ornate lullabies, and artists trained young people to perform the traditional *adok* dance and other dances with *biola* and *gendang* accompaniment.

In 1951, the Banyak Archipelago was named a district (*wilayah*) within the residency of South Aceh in the province of North Sumatra, and the local government in Haloban was led by the Assistant Wedana - Bp Ali Basa in Haloban, who was later succeeded by Bp Kasem Idris. In 1965-66 the country's first president – Soekarno – was deposed by Suharto, who presided over his anti-communist New Order government which began with the massacre of perhaps half a million suspected members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), including many inhabitants of Haloban which was a PKI stronghold. In Haloban five of the people's most competent and popular leaders disappeared, and their camat Bp Kasem Idris was replaced by Bp Abdul Foat who moved the Islands' administrative capital from Haloban to Pulau Balai.

The inhabitants of Tuangku Island were left with a high rate of unemployment and demoralisation among, who could now only work for themselves as fishermen, sailors or small gardeners.

The *Fifth Period* dates from 1965 to the fall of the Suharto regime in 1989. The people continued their lives as small farmers and fisherfolk, and held ceremonies with music and dance performances when they could afford them every few years. Suharto's *pembangunan*/development-policy government resulted in the creation of roads and other infrastructure in favoured parts of Indonesia, but almost totally excluded the Islands, which were a small part of the very large *kabupaten* of Aceh Selatan in North Sumatra province. So, the poverty of the people in Haloban and other population centres in the Islands persisted.

The *Sixth Period* dates from 1989 to 2010, including the tsunami and the end of Aceh's separatist conflict in 2005, which however had little effect on the practice of the arts. Indonesia's *Reformasi* era from 1989 on ushered in new democratic processes in a more decentralised government and gave more power to the *bupatis*, who could carry out their business in a relatively independent way. In 1999, the *bupati* in Aceh-Singkil regency established the *kecamatan*/district of Pulau Banyak with its capital in Pulau Balai. In 2001 he appointed Sutan Umar's (the "pretender raja's") grandson Bp M Hasbi S.H. as *camat* of Haloban, and divided the district into two *kecamatan*: Kecamatan Pulau Banyak and Pulau Banyak Barat, the latter with its capital in Haloban, which brought back administrative jobs to the former capital. Roads, a health centre and other infrastructure were built in and around the capital Pulau Balai, but there was minimal development in Haloban and elsewhere.

The great tsunami of 26 December 2004 had limited effect on the Islanders lives and the practice of the arts³⁶. 2005 was the year in which the separatist Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)

³⁶ Some islands were submerged and new ones appeared as a result of the tsunami, and the wells became salinated with sea water in some areas, as explained in Chapter II.

conflict with the Indonesian Army came to an end, enabling such political changes as this to be made. However, GAM was never strong in the Islands (pers. comm., elders in Haloban and Pulau Balai, in 2013).

In the *Seventh* (and final) *Period*, from 2010 to the time of writing, the tourist potential and music and dances of the Islands began to be exposed to the outside world through the *Festival Penyu Hijau* (Green Turtle Festival) held in 2010. However, the number of tourists attracted by the event was limited, and the next Festival is unlikely to be held until the end of 2017, as a separate development. Meanwhile, *Camat* M. Hasbi instituted new regulations that relaxed the *adat* requirements for local weddings and circumcisions and upset the elders because now only relatively rich or powerful families could hold full *adat* ceremonies including the sacred *adok* dance, while poor families could present only restricted *hukum*-based ceremonies as in the circumcision ceremony described in Chapter V.

The election of Indonesia's new President, Joko Widodo ("Jokowi"), in August 2014 ushered in new signs of economic hope for the poor Islander fisherfolk majority elites³⁷. Indonesia's new Minister for Maritime and Fisheries, Ibu Susi Pudjiastuti, tried to help fisherfolk in maritime areas such as the Banyak islands gain access to better boats and cracked down on vessels from neighbouring countries who were illegally fishing in Indonesian waters³⁸. However, in the end the campaign had limited effect in the Islands because of their relatively isolated location compared to, say, major shipping lanes such as the Strait of Melaka. Indeed, the economic hopes aroused by the Jokowi presidency have not sofar led to the Islanders' much

³⁷ See the article by Ken Setiawan in *Asian Currents* <http://asaa.asn.au/old-guard-continues-constrain-human-rights-reform-indonesia/#sthash.z3jcLpP5.dpu>, downloaded on 10.12.16.

³⁸ As reported in the newspapers, President Jokowi said that overfishing by foreigners causes Indonesia to suffer annual losses of over \$20 billion. See: "Explaining Indonesia's 'Sink the Vessels' Policy Under Jokowi") at <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/explaining-indonesias-sink-the-vessels-policy-under-jokowi/>>.

needed infrastructure development and support for the traditional and popular musical arts (pers. comm., the elders in Haloban and Pulau Balai, 2014 and 2016).

3.6. Conclusion

There are only peripheral written references in the colonial and post-colonial literature to the petty princedom of Haloban, which apparently served as a cultural and administrative centre of Kepulauan Banyak for centuries and was loosely linked to the kingdoms of Pagaruyung and Barus. However, the cultural memory of Haloban's past remain vivid in the minds and imagination of the Islanders to this day.

The history of the Urung Pulo's music-culture may for convenience be divided into seven periods. However, the people see their past as a seamless web that is romantically attached to the cultural memory of their colourful former kingdom and the elaborate *adat-istiadat* that developed along with its artistic expressions with it.

Haloban's inhabitants trace their former kingdom back to the time before the sultan of Pagaruyung is said to have sent a legendary prince to rule over Haloban to replace the islands' five original settlers who comprised the council of *datuk*/elders. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Islander's ceremonial arts were practiced in the royal Haloban court and other villages on the Tuangku, Baguk, and Ujung Batu islands as part of the Urang Pulo's ceremonial lives, *adat* and ancestral belief system. The arts must however be seen in relation to west-coast Sumatra's arts, the documented history of which goes back many centuries. These links are the reason why there are some similarities between the *adat istiadat* and the ritual songs and dances of the Islands, Barus and other west-coast towns and their hinterlands, and the Minangkabau *darek* (Mi., uplands) and *pasisieh* (coastal areas), though Kepulauan Banyak's culture is by no means the same as any of those areas; indeed, some items are completely unique.

Haloban's royal history and links with such courts as Pagaruyung and Barus are immortalised in the lyrics about the legendary Pagaruyung queen Bundo Kanduang and hero Cindue Mato that are sung in the sacred *adok* dance performances at the people's weddings and circumcisions to this day, just as the people's links with distant Penang Island are memorialised in the lyric of the *dendang Pulau Pinang* and associated *tari payung*/“umbrella dance”) (see chapters VI and VIII). Likewise, the people's fishing, trading, shipping, and agricultural activities and links with the large neighbouring islands of Simeulue and Nias are referred to in various song texts, lullaby lyrics and stories told by the *tukang talibun* (chapter VI and IX). The songs and stories detailing the historical links between Haloban and Sumatra's west-coastal ports and royal courts draw attention to the lucrative international benzoin and camphor trade in the area over the centuries, beginning in the early Christian era and lasting till the nineteenth century. And contact with the Portuguese, English and Dutch colonisers along Sumatra's west coast are captured in the Islanders' *langser* alias *langser madam* dance and its cousin of Nias descent, the *balanse madam* dance and *orkes gamat* music in a pair of villages of Nias descendants in Padang, as will be discussed in the chapters below

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORIGINAL STYLE OF THE LULLABIES (*BUAI*) IN DAILY AND CEREMONIAL USE

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the Islanders' once strong tradition of lullaby (*dendang buai*)³⁹ singing, alias *dendang/nyanyian menidurkan anak* ("child-sleeping song") singing, including its poetic lyrics, their vocal settings, and its social functions for parents, children, and society at large. The lullabies are at once a most intimate expression of parent's love and care for their small children and a remnant of a baby-thanksgiving ritual which still exists on the Sumatran mainland but seems to have virtually disappeared in the Islands.

As its unaccompanied melismatic vocal style based on melodic formulae somewhat resembles that of the Sumatran west-coast mainland, we can be certain that the tradition was originally transplanted to the islands by migration, intermarriage, and trade contact. Yet it has since developed its own identity, due mainly to its use of mixed Jamu Pulo Malay and Haloban languages which affects its music-lyric relationships and ornamental style. Recently an effort has been made to revitalise this tradition in Haloban, but it is in its very early stages.

As on Sumatra's west coast, the Islanders' lullaby melodies sung to children on a daily basis divide into two categories: (i) the older stratum of songs based on the local elaborately-ornamented, free rhythmic melodic style, tonal materials and instrumental tunings, and (ii) those that are influenced by diatonic tonal materials with harmonic implications and belong to the formerly accompanied *sikambang kapri* repertoire tunings, as in the *buai*-based song-dance

³⁹ *Buai* is the Malay - including the Jamu-Pasisir – spelling. The Islanders call it *bue*.

melodies that can be accompanied by a *biola* and drums (Kartomi 2012: 222-241)⁴⁰. Below I shall discuss an example of the former category, recorded in Haloban on Tuangku Island in 2013 and an example of the latter recorded in Teluk Nibung, Ujung Batu Island in 2010. The first was sung by Ibu Rosmiani, a 60-year old grandmother, and the second by Ibu Eriani, a 35-year old mother. Both lyrics are in a mix of Haloban and Jamu Pulo speech varieties, though Ibu Rosmiani's lyric has a higher proportion of Haloban words and a lower Malay correspondence than Ibu Eriani's, whose lyric has a higher proportion of Jamu-Malay words. Both performances are unaccompanied.

After analysing and comparing the two women's performances below, I shall briefly compare the most traditional style with samples of European-influenced ceremonial lullaby singing and its context of baby-thanksgiving ceremonies in Sibolga on Sumatra's west coast which were recorded by Kartomi in 1972 (see Kartomi 2012: 226- 30)⁴¹. Lullabies such as the two to be discussed below are sung by mothers (and rarely fathers) to their babies and small children every day in the Islands, but the songs are actually remnants of a former baby ceremonial tradition.

4.2. A Lullaby sung by Ibu Rosmiani in Haloban

This elaborately-ornamented melody, which is sung in free rhythmic melodic style using typically local tonal materials (tones 612345/F A Bb C# D E) and melodic formulae (4321/D C# Bb A and 1234/ABb C# D), is a *dendang/nyanyian menidurkan anak* ("child-sleeping song") in *sikambang asli* ("authentic *sikambang*) style. It has no harmonic implications or other

⁴⁰ This tradition belongs to the Malay-Portuguese patois of music and dance that developed over the centuries after musician-servants of the Portuguese colonial power (in 1511-1641) settled in many parts of the Malay world, including Tugu (the birthplace of *kroncong* music), and courts in Sumatra, the Riau Islands and beyond. This hypothesis was developed by Kartomi (2012: 241-248).

⁴¹ I also recorded lullabies sung by Islander immigrants from Nias who lived before in Kampung Teluk Nibung of Pulau Ujung Batu and now live in Suka Mamkmur of Pulau Tuangku), but as their verses were sung in the languages of Nias to different tonal materials and with different text-music relationships, I have not included them in this thesis (see **DVD excerpt 4.3**).

European traits whatever, nor any Muslim or Arabic tonal or modal characteristics such as those found in *dikie* and other songs of praise.

In this performance, Ibu Rosmiani took a deep breath and sang it in the strong, relatively high-pitched vocal style with melisma and other vocal ornamentation (*bungaran*) as she swayed a baby to sleep in a hammock swung from nails in the ceiling of her home in Haloban in 2014 (see **DVD excerpt 4.1**).

As she was free to improvise within the limits of the style, she ululated around the central tone on the basis of typical melodic formulae in tones, halftones and microtones with little tonal repetition, a high degree of melodic direction change, and an overall descending melodic direction/negative level shift. Her long melodically ornamented phrases were followed by rests as she breathed in deeply before the next long phrase (see **Transcription 4.1**).

The first verse that she sang addressed the baby girl in mixed Haloban and Jamu Pulo speech varieties as she swayed her in the sling:

<i>Buei buei</i>	Sway, sway,
<i>o gadis lau makko bue bue</i>	Oh your mother dearest girl, sway, sway
<i>Lake tidu lan e maknyo koei</i>	Quickly, fall to sleep, you are my dearest girl
<i>Laba tidu maknyoe bue</i>	Fall to sleep your mother dearest girl, sway
<i>Lake gadang nak ding o</i>	Grow up soon, my dear
<i>Lake gadang mak nyoe koei</i>	Grow up soon girl, you mother hope my dear

Transcription 4.1: Buai in Pulau Tuangku, DVD excerpt 4.1 (0:08 – 0:51 seconds)

Performer: Ibu Rosmiani (60 Years) in Mix Jamu and Haloban Languages

Original Recording by Ari Palawi in Asantola village, 10 October 2013

Length of video excerpt nine minutes forty-six seconds

Tempo: free (each beat is performed at approximately MM a quaver = 160-168)

Transcribed at original pitch by: Ari Palawi

Note: the notes with a quaver downward stem represent the sound and rhythm of the sling swaying to the right, while the notes with a quaver upward stem represent swaying to the left. There are two. 2 swings per measure in regular duple metre

Female Voice

Bu-ei - bu - e i o - ga -

Sling Swayed

Fml

dis - la-u - makko bu - ci - bu - e - i la - ke - ti -

Sig Swd

Fml

du - lan - e-mak-nyo ko - e - i la - ba ti - u-mak-nyoe -

Sig Swd

Fml

bu - e - i la - ke ga - dang nak ding o la - ke ga dang

Sig Swd

Fml

mak - nyoe ko e - i

Sig Swd

4.3. A Lullaby and Variation sung by Ibu Eriani in Teluk Nibung

This *dendang buai* in the Jamu Pulo speech variety is sung to lyrics in *pantun* quatrains, with each melodic line set to a line of the verse followed by a pause. As a rule, the last syllables of each line in the two couplets of a pantun verse are in ‘abab’ rhyme, but in Ibu Eriani’s largely

improvised performance, this rule was not strictly applied (see **DVD excerpt 4.2**). The whole 13 – verse tract that Ibu Eriani gave me is as follows:

<i>Buei... Buei</i>	Sway ... sway,
<i>Omakku anakku buai buaila babuai</i>	My dear son, fall to sleep
<i>Tidu nak babuai saying</i>	Fall to sleep, my sweetheart
<i>Tidu babuai di buaian</i>	Sleep as you sway
<i>Lake ma la gadang nak eiy</i>	I hope you will soon grow up, my son
<i>Kegadang nak lake mala nyo tenggi</i>	Grow up soon and be tall
<i>La bila la sikola nak,</i>	Obtain knowledge soon,
<i>Tuli-sikola nak jo mangaji</i>	Study at school and learn to recite the
<i>Qur'an</i>	
<i>Buai li nak ayun,</i>	Swing, sway
<i>Ayun buai la nak lanak saying</i>	My dear son swing as you are swayed
<i>Gadang malaisuk nak eiy,</i>	When you grow up my child
<i>Gadang is babalei guno</i>	You can be useful to others
<i>Kalau la tau nak,</i>	If we know, child,
<i>Kalau tau la nak eiy lah bakain panjang</i>	If we know when we shall die in this
<i>universe</i>	
<i>Saraso bakain eiy</i>	Then we shall know truly
<i>Saraso bakain malalo jaoh...</i>	That life is short
<i>Kalau la nak tau di rantau nak,</i>	If you go to live elsewhere, child,
<i>Tau di rantau nak bak mande mala</i>	Find someone to look after you
<i>Tompang saraso la bak mande nak eiy</i>	As if she were your mother
<i>Saraso bak mande nak kandong juo</i>	Someone like your own mother

As shown in Transcription 4.2, the singer freely ornaments the known diatonic melody as she sings without instrumental accompaniment, guided rhythmically by the swaying movement of the baby who is being swayed in a sling suspended from the ceiling.

The tonal material is unlike Ibu Rosmiani's in that it is not based on local tunings or tonal material, it is in a diatonic major scale, like the *dendang sikambang* melodies that are accompanied by a *biola* and frame drums (e.g. "Lagu Pulau Pinang") as discussed in Chapter

V. She uses melodic formulae (tones 4321, 1234, 5432, 5321, 4321) but her melodic invention is not governed by them as in Ibu Rosmiani's melodies. Her melodic invention is based on a diatonic major scale, the tones of which she recognises in conversation as: *do re mi fa sol la si do*, or tones 12345671 in solfa-based number script. The central tone is tone 1 (C), the second most important tone is tone 5 (G) and the third most important tone is tone 4 (F). Tone 2 (D) is treated as an unstable tone that acts as a pivot note and can therefore sing implied harmonies in her melodic line, seeming to move from C major to F major. In phrase 1, the singer establishes an implied C major feel in phrase 1, while by the end of phrase 2, tone 2 has emerged, enabling her to move to an implied G major for 2 bars. Phrase 3 remains in implied G major to the end of bar 9, then tone 2 appears again in phrase 4 to allow her to move back to the tonal centre and to end in C major (see **Transcription 4.2**).

Transcription 4.2: Buai in Pulau Ujung Batu, DVD excerpt 4.2 (1:23 – 1:52 seconds)

Performer: Ibu Eriani (38 Years) in Jamu Language

Original Recording by Ari Palawi in Teluk Nibung village, 17 Juni 2010

Length of video excerpt eight minutes and 17 seconds

Tempo: free (each beat is performed at approximately MM= 50)

Transcribed at orginal pitch by: Ari Palawi

Slow

Female voice

mf Bue - i bu - e - i o mak-ku

Sling swayed

a-nak-ku bu - e - i la - ba bu - e - i

mp ti - du la - ba bu - ei sa - yang - ti - du -

ba bu - ei di - bu - ei - an

The melodic line of each couplet of the verse is normally repeated in all 13 verses of the *pantun*, but in this particular recording, the singer also varies the first phrase in the sixth verse (see **Transcription 4.3**). The singer attempts to keep the melody in a high pitch range, starting from tone 3 (E), and leading up to the highest note 7 (B) from bars 1 to 6, and returns to the previous melodic line in the second half of the phrase from bars 7 to 10. Typically, the melisma comprise passages of three, five, or six semiquavers. In her subsequent Variation of the melody below, she features triplet rhythms and adds a lowered tone 7 (Bb) in line 1 for tonal colour, but this

does not alter the implied harmonies. The melodic style is essentially similar to her performance of verse 1.

Transcription 4.3: Variation of the *Buai* sung by Ibu Eriani in Teluk Nibung, DVD excerpt 4.2 (3:44 – 4:11 seconds)

Slow

Female voice Sling swayed

Bu-ci li-nak-a-yun a-yun bu-e-i

fml vc slg swd

lah nak lah nak sa - yang Ga dang ma la c suk nak -

fml vc slg swd

eiy ga - dang -

fml vc slg swd

is - ba - ba lei - gu no

4.4. The Singers and their Listeners

The singer of the first *buai* above - Ibu Rosmiani, whose family live with her, sings *buai* every day to lull her granddaughter to sleep. In her village, she is also admired as a proficient singer

of other local oral traditions. For example, she is an excellent singer of *dikie* (*zikir*); and she used to teach others this form of intoning Sufi-Muslim lyrics, many of which urge people always to remember and praise God and the Prophet Muhammed.



Figure 4. 1: Ibu Rosmiani is pretending her dendang buai to her grandchild as I requested her to be videotaped.

The singer of the second *buai*, Ibu Eriani from Teluk Nibung village, could only sing in the Jamu language. As explained above, Jamu has more concordances with Malay than the *bue* sung by Rosmiani from Haloban. When Ibu Eriani sang a story about a young *perantau* (person who went abroad, she advised him to try and find a substitute for his own mother, because his own mother at home feared she would not live long enough to be able to care for him while in the *rantau* (abroad). While she sang, her friend who was listening suddenly burst into tears, unable to hold her emotion when Ibu Eriani reached the *rantau* part. She said she was reminded of the time when her own mother passed away and her brother was in the *rantau*. Sadly, her brother was not able to come to her mother's funeral as he was involved in a political movement in mainland Aceh at that time. Although the story she sang was not directly related to her

mother's death, she was very affected emotionally by the performance. Lullabies clearly do not only function to lull a child to sleep but may move listeners to tears.



Figure 4.2: Ibu Eriani is crying when her story on the buai tells about the missing of her brother in the date of their mother passed away.

4.5. The Islander's and West-Coast Sumatran Lullabies Compared

I shall now describe samples of the two categories of lullabies in Kepulauan Banyak, referring to some samples of ceremonial lullaby singing recorded by Kartomi in 1972 in the context of baby-thanksgiving ceremonies on the west coast of Sumatra (see Kartomi 2012: music example 10.1, pp. 227). Then I shall compare them.

Like in Ibu Rosmiani's performance (Transcription 4.1), the ceremonial lullaby (*dendang/nyanyian menidurkan anak*) sung by Ibu Roswani Anwar and transcribed below is an authentic *buai sikambang asli* ("original *sikambang*-style lullaby") without any implied harmonic facets or Arabic tonal or modal characteristics. Ibu Roswani Anwar sang it in the strong relatively high-pitched, ornate style replete with melisma and *bungaran* of west-coast lullaby singing as she swayed a child to sleep at a baby-thanksgiving ceremony attended by a

house full of people in Sibolga in 1972. Also like Ibu Rosmiani, she breathed in deeply before beginning a line and controlled her expulsion of breath very gradually till she ran out of breath at the end of a line. Her performance moved in tones, halftones and microtones around the main tone [tone 1/E] at slow tempo and in free rhythm, with phrases 1 and 2 followed by an embellished statement of melodic formula 1 7 6 5/E D# C B in phrase 3, but she inserted different embellishments in the repeat that followed, after which the melody expanded to a range of six semitones. “The heartfelt intensity of her singing moved her attentive audience, who kept exclaiming *O lamak benar!* (“O, very nice!”), or *Aduh suara!* (“What a voice!”). The passion in her voice “made her voice moan” (*mendayukan suara*) (Kartomi 2012: 228).

The lyric was partly improvised in ‘abab’ rhyming couplets [mainly] as follows:

<i>Bue buyung bue o bue</i>	Sway, little boy, sway
<i>Anak mudo dibuekan</i>	Young child is being swayed
<i>Tanjak-tanjak Palembang dari jao</i>	Palembang is seen protruding from afar
<i>Ayun anak buekan bue</i>	Sway, child sway
<i>Anak mudo dibuekan salamo ado</i>	Young child in the sling, some day
<i>Banyak-banyak batanam ubi tanah taleh keladi,</i>	You will plant a great deal of cassava and taro

The main difference between Ibu Roswani Anwar’s performance in Sibolga and Ibu Rosmiani’s in Haloban lies in Ibu Rosmiani’s much more ornate style of singing and the fact that she was singing for an audience at a baby thanksgiving ceremony that lasted several days, a practice that is now rare, whereas Ibu Eriani was simply singing informally to a baby in her home. However, both singers resemble each other’s practices in several respects, especially in that they take a deep breath before singing each line and they pause at the end of a line in silence. The structure and content of the partly improvised verses sung, the slow tempo, and the use of free metre and rhythm are also similar.

Their performance styles differ in that the lullabies sung at the 1972 performance were sung by a female shaman who invited and welcomed the spirits of the ancestors to attend the

ceremony, and expressed wonder and enthusiasm for the future of the new-born baby in her song. In the next part of the days-long ceremony, the shaman, prayer leader (*imam*), elders, parents and other relatives then formally snipped off a piece of the baby's hair as they welcomed the baby into their daily lives. The singer commented in song on the baby's possible path to adulthood and other matters. Later the guests sprinkled the baby with yellow rice grains (*beras kunyit*), and after *magrib* prayers in the early evening, a pair of repartee singers, a violinist and a pair of *gandang* players performed the *sikambang kapri* songs, as they are called, in *pantun* or *syair* quatrains, with dancing by all-male couples of the *tari Pulau Pinang* together with similar songs to those sung on the Islands at their dancing sessions deep into the night [Kartomi 2012: 225-227].

Transcription 4.4: Buai in Sibolga, North Sumatra Province
Original Recording by Hidris and Margaret J. Kartomi in Sibolga, January 1972
Tempo: MM= 160-168



4.6. Some Lyrics and a List of Jamu-Pulo Words in Lullabies

I shall now briefly compare the setting of the lullaby lyrics from Kepulauan Banyak presented above to setting of lyrics in a transcription of phrases in lullabies recorded by Kartomi in 1972 in Sibolga on Sumatra's west coast (see Transcriptions in Kartomi 2012: 227). Then I shall end this chapter with a few poetic lyrics from Kepulauan Banyak lullabies and a list of Jamu Pulo words sung in the lullabies (Transcriptions 4.1 and 4.2) with their Malay and English glosses., and comments on the lexical correspondences between Jamu Pulo and Malay words in the lyrics.⁴²

The partly improvised lyrics of the Islander lullaby performances in Transcriptions 4.2 and 4.3 are very similar to those of the mainland lullaby in Transcription 4.4. They all focus on local

⁴² I am grateful to linguist Bp Kismullah of Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh for advice on these words and their glosses.

words that translate approximately as “sleep, sway, young child” and contain terms or metaphors of endearment. Yet the melodic settings of Transcriptions 4.2 and 4.3 on the one hand and 4.4 on the other are poles apart. The lullaby recorded by Kartomi in Sibolga (transcription 4.4) on mainland Sumatra in 1972 represents an older, intensely melismatic style of melisma comprising small-intervals [half tones, full tones and intervals of three or four half tones] and no western harmonic implications whatever. Moreover, the singer regularly takes a deep breath and sings highly variable rhythms in free metre until she runs out of breath, thus producing ‘tumbling strain’ style melody [to use Curt Sachs’ term] as for example in Aboriginal Australian cultures [Sachs 1962:44]. The other two singers, whose performances were recorded in the Islands (Haloban and Teluk Betung) in 2013 and 2010 respectively, use very little melisma, preferring mainly syllabic settings and using both large and small intervals. The two Islander singers are influenced by international diatonic melodies with harmonic implications that they hear on the media. Thus, they represent a later tradition of lullaby singing rather than the “tumbling strain” variety. In 4.2 and 4.4 the singers pause at the end of a stream of melody, and while the first singer uses some melisma, she uses much less than in 4.4, and the singer in 4.3 produces an almost syllabic setting.

The following table shows the lexical correspondence between Jamu Polo and Malay words as found in the lullabies in Transcriptions 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1: Jamu Polo – Malay lexical correspondences in the lullabies from Haloban and Teluk Nibung:

Jamu	Malay	English gloss
[anak mudo]	[anak muda]	young child
[ayun]	[ayun]	swing
[bak]	[bak]	(be) like
[bila]	[waktu]	time
[buai]	[buai]	sway

[gadang]	[dengan cepat]	soon
[gadi]	[gadis]	girl
[guno]	[guna]	use/means/meaning
[jo]	[juga]	too
[kalauala]	[kalaualah]	if (softened with particle la = lah in Malay)
[ko]	[kau]	you
[lake]	[lekas]	quickly
[mangaji]	[mengaji]	recite the Qur'an
[nak, anak]	[anak]	child
[nak]	[nak]	want to / going to
[saraso]	[serasa]	as though
[sayang]	[sayang]	dear
[sikola]	[sekolah]	school
[tau]	[tahu]	know
[tenggi]	[tinggi]	rall
[tidu]	[tidur]	slee
[tompang]	[topang]	support
[tuli]	[belajar]	Learn

4.7. Conclusion- Two Styles and Several Functions of Lullaby Singing

As this chapter, has intimated, the two musical categories of lullaby singing each have a place in the Islanders' lives. Both are unaccompanied and sung in relatively free rhythm, metre and tempi to lengthy lyrics in pantun form, with the first (putatively older) type having heavily ornamented melodies constructed on standard 4-tone melodic formulae and the tendency to sing in small intervals and occasional melodic leaps, and second type having diatonic melodies with harmonic implications in their melisma. Both sets of lyrics are in a mix of Haloban and Jamu Pulo speech varieties, though Ibu Rosmiani's example has a higher proportion of Haloban words and a lower Malay correspondence than Ibu Eriani's example, the lyrics of which have a higher proportion of Jamu-Malay words.

In the Islands, as on Sumatra's west coast, the main practical function of the lullabies today is to calm and lull a baby to sleep, but they also serve to familiarise the baby with the sounds and the musical and textual idioms of his/her own culture. They also constitute the baby's first sustained opportunity to hear the beautiful lullaby repertoire. Thus, the lullabies become the basis of the baby's subsequent musical experiences and they influence the baby's knowledge of the music-culture into which s/he is born for life, allowing the child to grow up with a deep knowledge of the culture's classical vocal style and repertoire.

The lullabies also serve at least three functions for parents and grandparents. Hearing them sung induces them to recall meaningful memories and experiences of their own childhood. It also allows them to feel and express the emotions aroused in them by the songs, including feelings of frustration or sadness at hearing of others' problems. And the singing of lullabies allows parents to express their hopes and prayers for the child.

Finally, the lullabies serve several functions in the community. They help preserve the people's knowledge of the language and its idioms, express the community's religious beliefs and ancestral veneration, and preserve aspects of the history of the community, for example the common experience of grief when parents lose contact with their children if they go abroad to seek their fortune. Thus, when a *buai* is sung over and over again, it can preserve communal experiences and stories from the past, and become a historical record.

Of course, many young people in the Island's most cosmopolitan town, Pulau Balai, have lost interest in their traditional music-culture due to their exposure to international pop music on the media, and few can sing the lullabies themselves. Recently efforts have begun to revive interest in this important and distinctive part of the Islanders' musical repertoire, even sending a lullaby singer to perform overseas. However, the efforts are in their very early stages and have yet to prove whether they are sustainable or not.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIKAMBANG, THE ISLANDERS' CORE MUSICAL ARTS TRADITION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SUMATRA'S WEST COAST

Sikambang is the name of a cycle of legends and an umbrella term for the whole solo and responsorial singing repertoire (*dendang sikambang*) by the men and the women of Kepulauan Banyak, including the lullabies and other solo songs, the song-dances with violin and frame drum accompaniment, and the *talibun* story-intoning by bards in *dendang sikambang* style.

This chapter contextualises and analyses the Islanders' male ceremonial singing and song-dances with instrumental accompaniment in *dendang sikambang* style, and more briefly, the secret female practice of creating and singing *dendang sikambang* while collecting firewood in the forest with their female friends. It focuses mainly on the current situation in Haloban and Asantola on Tuangku Island, where the traditions are strongest, though it compares the situation with Kartomi's description (Kartomi 2012: 220-226) of it my own field experience along Sumatra's west coast.

The main sources for this chapter are the *dendang sikambang* field recordings that I made in Kepulauan Banyak, Nias, and several villages on the west coast of North Sumatra and West Sumatra in 2010, 2013 and 2014; and the gifts of a DVD of a “complete” wedding ceremony in Singkil in 2004 and a DVD of an *adat*-based circumcision ceremony in Haloban in 2007. In order to delineate Haloban's *dendang sikambang* style from other *dendang* styles on Sumatra's Malay-west coast. I have also compared my recordings of the Islanders' *dendang sikambang* with some of Kartomi's unpublished field recordings in many villages on Sumatra's west coast

in 1972, 1981, 1982 and 1986 (see Kartomi Collection in the Music Archive of Monash University).

As noted above, the word *sikambang* is an umbrella term for the solo and responsorial singing repertoire and song-dances with violin and frame drum accompaniment in the Islands. In many ways, this tradition resembles the group of genres called *sikambang* on Sumatra's west coast between Singkil and Sibolga, but it differs in some important details. Thus, before I embark on my discussion of *sikambang* in the Islands, I need to outline Kartomi's findings on west-coastal *sikambang* and compare them with mine⁴³.

The *sikambang* tradition on the west coast divides into two large categories – (i) unaccompanied *sikambang pasisir asli* (“original coastal *sikambang*”) and (ii) *sikambang kapri* (*kapri*-style *sikambang* which is accompanied by *biola* and *gandang* (Kartomi 2012: 221-224). The former includes solo and group responsorial *dendang sikambang* singing in *pantun* or *syair* poetry, while the latter includes a repertoire of around 16 song-dances with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment (Kartomi 2012: 221-226). However, my field research in 2012 and 2014 indicates that the unaccompanied *sikambang pasisir asli* and accompanied *sikambang kapri* are not differentiated in Kepulauan Banyak, that although the two genres are practiced in the Islands, those two terms are not used at all. Thus, all the solo and group responsorial singing in the Islands as well as the song-dances with violin and frame drum accompaniment are included under this term. Moreover, versions of the *sikambang* legend are told differently by bards in Kepulauan Banyak and Nias

⁴³ Kartomi (2012: 218) argues that *sikambang* is a key term in the Pasisir Sumando performing arts. Pasisir Sumando is actually a Minangkabau term for the Malay west coast Sumatra. It was probably used because the people were descendants of migrants from West Sumatra province. *Sumando* can mean ‘guest’ (I., *orang datang/tamu*) or migrants (*perantau*) from Minangkabau.

The Islanders' term for an expert *dendang* singer is *pendendang*. Below I shall analyse the various parameters of Islander *pendendang* style, including the musical metre, rhythm, formulaically-based melody, and melodic ornamentation.

5.1. The *Sikambang* Legend and its Sung Poetic Lyrics

In her book, *Musical Journeys in Sumatra*, Kartomi recounted two versions of the local legend of *sikambang* in several districts and regencies between Sorkam and Natal in North Sumatra province (2012: 228 and 404).

The first version of the legend recounted by Kartomi is about a mermaid named *Si Kambang* (*Si* here meaning "she"), who sang a *dendang* that expressed her sadness when she failed to find a golden comb belonging to her renowned mortal mistress, Queen Maharani Putri Runduk, who had accidentally dropped it into the sea. Her moving song was heard by a passing fisherman who was so impressed by her extraordinarily beautiful voice that he could not forget her voice or her song, and he sang it everywhere he went, thereby helping the locals create a new genre of mainly sad songs. The second version of the legend refers to the death of Si Kambang's mistress the Queen, who desperately wanted to avoid marrying a suitor, *Raja Jonggi*, and could only avoid him by sinking to the bottom of the ocean, whereupon she ascended to heaven.

Both versions of the legend represent *Si Kambang* as a female singer who created the prototype for a whole genre of solo and group responsorial vocal music, and song-dances with instrumental accompaniment that came to be called *sikambang*.

However, my research in Haloban and some Sumatran towns between Sorkam and Singkil in 2013 found that the legendary character Si Kambang who is believed to be the source of the *dendang sikambang* genre is presented as a male character and that the legend is told in several other different ways.

According to a version of the legend that I heard in Bukit Batupangan village in the Barus district of the Central Tapanuli Regency of North Sumatra, the *dendang* prototype was first sung by a fisherman who sailed from the mouth of the river near Sibolga across the bay to Mursala Island. As he was worried that he could not catch any fish to feed his family, he expressed his anxiety by singing a sad *dendang*, and it happened to be heard by some other fishermen who liked it so much that they kept singing it. The *pantun* verse that he sang, and is still sung by people living between Sorkam and Singkil, is as follows:

<i>Payakumbuh kotanya ngampek</i>	There are four towns in the Payakumbuh district (<i>koto</i>)
<i>Basimpang jalan ka limbanang</i>	Limbanang village lies in the centre
<i>Jalo lusuh ikan ndak dapek</i>	The net has broken and fish cannot be caught
<i>Badanlah dingin dek baranang</i>	I would swim [and catch them] but the water is too cold

As is typical of Malay *pantun* verses, the first couplet in the verse expresses an allusion that is unrelated to the main intent of the verse, which is expressed in the second couplet. This sad verse, usually sung loudly at high pitch, expresses the feelings of a depressed fisherman who knows he cannot feed his family that day. In subsequent verses, advice is offered that one should work hard and earn well while young to prepare for old age (pers. comm. Bp. Rajidun Tanjung, Batu Pangan Village, Barus, 26 October, 2014). The fisherman who sang the song was dubbed *Si Kambang* and remembered as the creator of the *pantun* that he sang in what came to be known in the Islands as *dendang sikambang* style.

There are at least three more versions of the legend in the Kepulauan Banyak, especially in Pulau Tuangku, and they hold that the first *pendendang sikambang* was a man. One version of the legend is about a prince named Aule in Pagaruyung who had made love to his beloved royal aide named *Kambang*, and she was pregnant. The king then ordered his guards to kill both Aule and Kambang in the forest. But the guards did not have the heart to carry out the king's orders and simply left Aule and Kambang in two distant parts of the jungle, one in the east and one in

the west. According to one version of the legend, the pair kept calling out each other's names and were finally reunited. Two other versions of the legend hold that Prince Aule eventually killed Kambang, or that she died while giving birth to their baby. In both versions, the baby was crying so Prince Aule sang a sad lullaby to calm him and his *dendang* was heard by a bird flying overhead. The bird kept singing the *dendang* after witnessing her death. From then on many people sang this version of the *sikambang* repertoire. Moreover, this *dendang* inspired the creation of a lullaby (*dendang buai*, or *dendang membuaikan anak*) that is sung while swaying a baby in Pulau Tuanku, Kepulauan Banyak (pers. comm. from Bp. Misri Caniago in Haloban, Pulau Tuangku, 9 October 2013).

Despite the local variations in the legend, however, all the communities in Kepulauan Banyak and on the west coast of Sumatra agree that the term *sikambang* refers not only to the orally transmitted legend but also the complete genre/repertoire of *sikambang* songs, the complete repertoire of 16 *sikambang* song-dances with instrumental accompaniment; and particular performances of these genres.

5.2. The *Sikambang* Repertoire and Associated Performance Rules

As has been noted, the complete set of *sikambang* songs and song-dances are performed only at the most complete and traditional of *adat* ceremonies – the *baralek adat*, which include weddings, circumcisions and, very rarely in the Islands today, baby thanksgivings, which were regularly held on Sumatra's west coast till the 1980s (Kartomi 2012: 220-222), and were probably regularly held in the Islands too.

The complete repertoire in Kepulauan Banyak consists of the following sixteen *sikambang* song-dances with instrumental accompaniment: *adok* (lit. meaning “traditional customs”/*adat*), *Bungkus* (“a package”), *pondok batu* (“stone corner”), *anak Padang* (“someone born in Padang”), *sampayan* (J. “You”), *mak inang* (“wetnurse”), *perak-perak* (“silver objects or

coins”), *lelehusen* (“a *pecel* vegetable dish”), *pulau Pinang* (“Penang Island”) alias *payung* (“umbrella”), *siantung* (“a hanging object”), *sinandong* (a song in the slow, sad Malay category) alias *sikambang lawi* (“sea *sikambang*”), *sikambang Uci* (Uci is a girl’s nickname), *sikambang asli* (“original *sikambang*”), *sikambang kepri* (*sikambang* with *kepri*-style violin and frame drum accompaniment⁴⁴) and *Sikambang Boton* (Boton is a place name). Their Malay *joget*-like dance movements were presumably once performed by mixed couples, but from at least three generations ago the female role in each couple has been played by a male dancer, who sometimes wears a scarf/*slendang* (M.) over his shoulders as a reminder that he is playing a female role. As I discovered in my various field trips, parts of the same repertoires are also performed by Kepulauan Banyak migrants in mainland Sumatra, and east-coastal Nias.

From the above list, the songs *Sikambang Lawi*, *Sikambang Guci* and *Sikambang Boton* are no longer remembered by most artists whom I know in Haloban. *Sikambang Asli* and *Sikambang Kepri* are only performed in villages in west-coastal Sumatra (Kartomi 2012: 235-244), yet even there complete *sikambang* performances can be heard only in a few villages on the mainland. In Haloban eleven of the above *dendang sikambang* items are still performed, but not the last five. At a *baralek*/ceremony, two of them - *Siantung* and *Lelehusen* - are only performed by day - between the end of the *baralek* procession and the wedding or circumcision ceremony, while *Sinandong* or *Sikambang Lawi*, *Sikambang Guci*, *Pulau Pinang*, *Perak Perak*, *Mak Inang*, *Sampeyan* may be performed by day or night.

I shall now introduce the *baralek* rules and procedures in Haloban and Asantola (a village of former Haloban inhabitants), and then describe a circumcision ceremony held in Asantola in 2014.

⁴⁴ *Kepri* probably refers to the Kepri area in the Mediterranean where the European violin influence in the Malay world originated (Kartomi 2012: 235 – 240).

5.3. Baralek Ceremonies in Haloban: The Male Sikambang Ceremonial Tradition and its Music and Dance

It is the group of male elders - the *ninik mamak* – who officially decide on all mainstream domestic ceremonial matters and their implications for the arts performed at ceremonies in Haloban and Asantola. The Islander term *ninik mamak*, which derives from the same term used in West Sumatra, means the organisation of hereditary “senior males in a matriarchal Minangkabau family” (Sanday 2002: 258), was long ago transplanted to the Islands from Minangkabau communities and west-coastal Malay Sumatran villages, along with the term *baralek* (“traditional ceremony”) and the names for the *galombang duobale* and *randai* dances performed in Islander *baralek* processions. In fact, the Islanders believe that term *ninik mamak* was brought to Haloban and the Tuangku kingdom by its inaugural king, the prince who was delegated by the sultan of Pagaruyung to found the Tuangku kingdom in the 18th century (see Chapter III). Not surprisingly, however, in the transmission *ninik mamak* and other terms from Pagaruyung lost all of their Minangkabau matriarchal connotations. The Islanders’ *ninik mamak* and associated *adat istiadat* practices are quite different from those of their counterparts in West Sumatra today.

Until ca. the 1980s, the *baralek* ceremonies – weddings and circumcisions - lasted a week or more and the *ninik mamak* required that a buffalo or four goats be sacrificed to feed the large number of guests. The *baralek* included daily shamanic activities which, however, have radically diminished in the last few decades because of competing Muslim versus shamanic pressures and the outlawing of “black magic” (*ilmu sihir*)⁴⁵. Few villagers today have the resources – time as well as money - to hold a *baralek* for longer than one day and night, despite

⁴⁵ Bp Miswadi, the Kepala Kampung (village Head) in Teluk Nibung told me that his village is feared by some would-be visitors because of the skills of its *dukun* for “black magic”, despite it being a criminal offence. Rumour has it that the *dukun* can punish a singer of *dendang* whom he wishes to punish by willing him to lose his voice.

the customary mutual help offered by a host's neighbours, and even if they can combine the ceremonies of two or more families to save costs.

So, some time ago, the *ninik mamak* decided that *baralek* should be divided into two types: the “*adat*-based ceremonies” and the “*hukum* (law)-based ceremonies”. To obtain permission to hold an *adat*-based ceremony, the host must sacrifice a buffalo (or equivalent supply of meat) for the days of feasting, in which case all the shamanic and Muslim rituals can be performed, the fully decorated *pelaminan* (throne for the bridegroom or circumcision boy) and symbolically meaningful ceiling hangings in the host's home will be set up, and the complete repertoire of song-dances will be performed over at least three days and nights. For the “*hukum*-based (“law-based) ceremonies” on the other hand, a goat or chicken substitute sacrifice will do, limited rituals will be carried out, simpler decorations will be put up, and limited performances will be given over the single day and night of the *baralek*.

In fact, then, the elders' decision to allow a prospective host to hold a “complete” *adat*-based *baralek* as opposed to a limited *hukum*-based ceremony depends on the proposer's financial feasibility. The crucial difference between the two categories from the performers' point of view is that the sacred *adok* (lit. *adat*) dance described below can only be performed at an *adat*-based ceremony⁴⁶.

Several years ago, Haloban's Camat (government district leader) was able to afford to hold an *adat*-based ceremony in Haloban, but that was a rare occurrence, and it was resented by the rest of Haloban's population because to them the *Camat's* family represents the “pretender sultan's” grab for power and royal lands (see Chapter III); thus, in their eyes that *baralek adat* was funded by what they regard as their ill-gotten gains.

⁴⁶ This paragraph and subsequent paragraphs are based on interviews with the *ninik mamak* in Haloban, especially Bp Anhar Sitanggang and his brothers, in Haloban in 2012, 2014, and 2016.

Lengthy preparations precede the holding of a *baralek adat* or a *baralek hukum* at Haloban and other villages on Tuangku Island. Because *baralek adat* are given so rarely, I am only able to describe a *baralek hukum* below. But first I shall describe the preparations for a ceremony.

5.4. Preparations for an *Adat-* or *Hukum-based* Ceremony on Pulau Tuangku

After the host has requested permission to hold a circumcision ceremony at a meeting of the *ninik mamak*, the elders hold several meetings at which the appropriate *adat* procedures and the host's proposed budget for the ceremony is discussed. The essential aspect of a "complete" *adat*-based *baralek* is that the host can afford to fund daily feasts for a large number of guests over, say, at least three days, by sacrificing a buffalo, or – say - four goats. If he can do so, the ceremony will be classified as *adat*-based, and the sacred *adok* dance with its invitation to the ancestral spirits to come down, will be allowed to be performed, along with all the other *sikambang* songs and song-dances and other ceremonial trappings⁴⁷. If he cannot, the elders will decide the ceremony must be *hukum*-based. Then at their final preparatory meeting on the eve of the ceremony, the elders enjoy a performance of a few *dendang sikambang* and announce their decision as to whether the ceremony on the morrow will be a wedding or a circumcision, and whether it will be *adat*-based or *hukum*-based. A bridegroom is treated the same at his wedding as a boy about to be circumcised.

The description of the ceremony below is based on my interviews with elders, women and artists, and a video recording of a *hukum*-based circumcision ceremony (*baralek sunat*) in Asantola village, near Haloban, on 20 October, 2014.

⁴⁷ The sacred *adok* dance is rarely performed today, partly because few men remember how to perform it. Fortunately, we at Monash University were able to record the *adok* song-dance when Bp Anhar Sitanggang visited us with three other dancers and performed it at a concert on the campus on 28 September, 2016.

5.5. Description of a *Hukum-style* Circumcision Ceremony in Asantola

On the eve of the ceremony, the *ninik mamak* enjoyed a performance of a few *dendang sikambang* and announced that the *baralek* on the morrow would be a law-based circumcision ceremony with two goats sacrificed for the feasting, and that during the day there would be a hair-cutting and *berdandan* (dressing) ceremony with women singing *dikie* choruses (M., alias *zikir*: Ar., songs of praise of Allah and the Prophet Muhammed), a morning procession, an afternoon singing session, a late afternoon procession around the village, and male dancing of the *sikambang* repertoire of song-dances all night.

As is to be expected, the *hukum*-based circumcision ceremony described below lasted only one day and night, and it lacked the sacred *adok* dance and formerly shaman-led ritual invocations which differentiated each day's proceedings in *adat*-based ceremonies in the past. Indeed, knowledge of these matters, it is claimed, is now lost, for Haloban ostensibly no longer has a practicing *dukun*. It also lacked the full symbolically meaningful decorations on the *pelaminan* and hangings from the ceiling, though some were hung. However, the *ninik mamak* did allow the traditional processions with performances around the streets to be held in the morning and late afternoon, with performances of the *randai* and *gelombang duobale* martial arts-based dances in front of the host's home at the end of the procession. They allowed the male host and male guests to enjoy an afternoon session of *dendang sikambang* performances, and to perform some of the sixteen *sikambang* song-dances that night from ca. 9 pm to ca. 8 the next morning.

Early in the morning on the day of the *baralek*, the boy's hair was ceremonially trimmed (M. *menggunting*) ceremony and he was ceremonially dressed by his attendants in formal attire to the accompaniment of women singing *dikie* in the front room of the home. The relatives and friends of the boy, including quite a few children, then gathered in front of the host's home to start the *mengarak* ("processing") around the village. A *pendendang* prepared to sing (*badendang*) a series of *pantun*, accompanied by a dozen or so men who were ready to play a

repetitive rhythm on the *gandang* that they held in both hands. An electronically installed speaker, including a wet cell, was pushed along in a cart beside the procession to amplify the *pendendang*'s voice and any announcements.



Figure 5. 1: Left: A boy having his hair ceremonially trimmed at his circumcision ceremony in Asantola in 2014 (left). Centre and right: *Gandang* players and a *biola* player sitting cross-legged on the host's verandah as they accompany a *pendendang* singing.

After loudly exclaiming the words ‘*a-re----to---*’ at high pitch, the lead *pendendang* sang the following *pantun* verses in a loud, high-pitched voice:

*Ambik pandan anyam katika
kambangkanlalu dialaman
Tasuo isuk kato batingka
Baok bagurau kahalaman*

Take the *pandan* leaves and weaving mat
(When finished) lay it on the ground of the yard
If we have a misunderstanding in the near future
Please don't have hard feelings while we sit on the mat

*Pulau asok pulau kiramat
singgahan urang sipangai
Pintakkan doa baksalamat
nantingga jangan batangisi*

Pulau Asok is a sacred island
Where wise people stop by
Pray for blessings
Those of you who stay, please don't cry

The immediate response to the *pendendang*'s first sung phrase by one of the villagers was a short yell on the nonsense syllable “*te...*”, which members of the procession knew was a command to begin the procession. The group of *gandang* players near the front of the procession began to play a slow, cyclic rhythmic motive on the deeply resonant, low-pitched

sound *dum* (beaten a third of the way toward the centre of the drum head) and the sharp, high-pitched sound *ba* (beaten on the edge of the frame drum head), which I have notated as follows:

Figure 5.2: the cyclic *dum-ba* rhythm played on the *gandang* frame drums in the procession around the village.



In the next half hour, three other *pendendang* sang several *pantun* verses each in *dendang sikambang* style. (My analysis below is based on my recording of the *dendang* at the end of the procession, which differed from the *dendang sikambang* at the beginning of the procession only in that it was not preceded by a loud yell). As the last *pantun* verse was sung to the same *gandang* rhythmic motive as notated above, the musicians increased the tempo of their playing to very fast, then came to a sudden stop. The procession ended with a performance by a group of young men, wearing colourful Malay trouser-suits (*teluk belanga*), of the circular *randai* and *galombang duabale* (“twelve waves”) dances with *gandang* accompaniment in front of the host’s home yard. The *randai* dance contains many martial art (M. *silat*) - style movements performed in a circular formation, and the *galombang duabale* contains twelve such movements performed in a square formation.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Variants of these Islander adaptations of the traditional west-coastal Sumatran *randai* and *gelombang duabaleh* dances, with their many *silat* (martial art-based) movements and frame drum accompaniment, are also performed in Barus, Sibolga and other west coastal Sumatran towns. The two dances are of probable Minangkabau origin.



Figure 5.3: The *mengarak* procession around Asantola during a circumcision ceremony in 2014.

After the *mengarak* (“processing”) crowd had returned to the host’s house, the boy walked onto the verandah to pay his respects to his parents and/or male relatives. Because he felt very close to one of his returned *perantau* uncles from whom he had been separated for some years but had just returned to his former home for the ceremony, he first paid his respects to his uncle by kneeling and lowering his forehead to touch his knees, and then he kneeled in front of his parents and repeated the same respectful movements. He then stood up and sat in state on the *pelaminan* (decorated throne) that his family had prepared for him, staying there for the next few hours, including during the meals served to him.

The boy then mounted the host’s verandah, paid respects to his parents and/or close relatives as the case may be, and sat in state in the decorated throne-like canopy called the *palaminan* (M., H.) in the host’s home, where the people treated him as *raja sehari* (M., “king for a day”).

After the women provided and served a midday feast to all the men present, a session of male *dendang sikambang* singing accompanied by *biola* and *gandang* (frame drums) was held..In the afternoon the *dendang sikambang* and other musicians performed *dendang sikambang* for

about two hours, then the men processed around the village again, with the lead vocalist singing *dendang sikambang* verses to the responses of other male singers accompanied by a number of male *gandang* players, as in the procession that morning.

In the evening the women again provided the boy and all the men present with a feast, after which some solo vocalists sang ornamented *sikambang* melodies to lyrics in free metre for the male guests who joined in the *gandang* playing, and the men performed *sikambang* song-dances to the accompaniment of a *pendendang*, *biola* violinist and *gandang* players from around 9pm till around 8am⁴⁹. The main observers were the children and a few women who also served drinks, as most of the men joined in the song-dancing, though the women left around 10pm to go home and look after the small children.



Figure 5.4: A *pendendang* singing with a microphone, characteristically holding his cheek to help him concentrate (left), and a *gandang* player at an all-night performance in a *baralek* (right)

⁴⁹ Unfortunately, I was unable to videotape the vocal-dance-instrumental items in Asantola on my 2014 field trip. However, I have many recordings of them from my 2010 and 2013 field trips, including the set of DVDs from circumcision ceremonies in Haloban (2007), and also a DVD of an *adat*-based wedding held in Singkil in 2006.

5.6. The “Incompleteness” of the Ceremony

As explained above, this *baralek* was incomplete, and much shorter than the fully *adat*-based ceremonies that were described to me. If, say, the event had been planned for three days and nights, the *baralek adat* would have continued with a similar daily order of events for the next 64 hours. In the past when there were practicing *dukun* (shamans) in Haloban, a *dukun* would perform a series of mantra and spells each day of the ceremony, but the present-day generation denies that there are any *dukun* left in the village, and that in any case, their activities, especially if they involve “black magic” (*ilmu sihir*) are illegal, and ostensibly no longer occur.

The *ninik mamak* were supposed to meet several times in the two months before the ceremony to plan the proceedings, but because the host of the above ceremony could not afford to feed them at their meetings, and certainly could not afford to feed hundreds of guests - including government officials - at a “complete” circumcision celebration, the *ninik mamak* met only once, and decided that the host’s proposal did not accord with the criteria for an *adat*-based ceremony. Besides, the host’s house was considered to be too small and humble for an *adat*-based ceremony, and the planned decorations on the *pelaminan* and colourful cloths, ornaments and ribbon hangings from the ceiling were considered to be incomplete. Thus, the ceremony was to last only one day and had to be of the *hukum*-based variety, which meant that the sacred, symbolically important *adok* dance described in Chapter VI was not allowed to be performed.

The *ninik mamak* would not have approved of the fact that they performed the *lelehusen* and some other song-dances that are only supposed to be played by day, nor that they did not perform the *siantung* item that is normally reserved for a daytime *baralek* procession, nor that they missed performing the *sikambang lawi*, *sikambang guci*, *sinandong*, *Pulau Pinang*, *perak-perak*, *mak inang*, and *sampeyan* song-dances, which are allowed to be performed by night or day. Another incomplete aspect of the ceremony was the costumes worn: both the *pendendang*

and the other male participants wore casual dress, unlike the ceremonial *teluk belanga* (trouser suit with a shiny *kain songket* wrapped around the buttocks at the waist) that they would have worn at an *adat*-based ceremony.

I shall now discuss *dendang sikambang* performance style and my analyses of select performances.

5.7. Vocal Style in *Dendang Sikambang* Performances

The *pendendang* and their respondents generally sing (*mendendangkan*) either well-known *pantun* quatrains or refer to their own experiences or ideas as they make up their own, and not necessarily in rhyme, ensuring that the first couplet contains an allusion and the second couplet the core meaning of the verse. As *pendendang* Bp Adnan told me, there are four kinds of poetic content in the songs: *puji* (praise) for a significant figure in one's personal life; *kasih* or *sanjung* (love and admiration) for a respected or beloved person; *untung* (luck) while in the *rantau* (abroad); and *hina* (wisdom) gained from life experience. The poetic language divides into the *halus* (gentle) and *kasar* (rough). If a *pendendang* sings a *pantun* in the *halus* language of Haloban, the respondent must reply in *halus* Haloban language as well, and the same applies to *pendendang* who sing lyrics in *kasar* Melayu Pulo which is spoken by some people in Teluk Nibung and some other villages.

After taking a deep breath the *pendendang* starts to sing a long melodic phrase very loudly and at high pitch on a vocable such as 'e', 'a', or other word such as *aulé* or *maule*, which refers to the name of the prince in the Haloban version of the *Sikambang* legend that I referred to (pers. comm., Bp Adnan). Then he performs the first line of the *pantun* followed by a line of vocables, then the second line of the pantun, the third line, a variant of the third line, ending with an incomplete line four.

Each *pendendang* has his own unique singing style. He varies the poetic content, range of the tones he chooses to sing, and the durations of tones in each melodic phrase. If one of the men playing the frame drums is inspired to respond to the lead *pendendang's* singing, he may begin to sing his verse before the *pendendang* ends his final pantun line. Sometimes more than one singer spontaneously responds to the main *pendendang's* final line, thus making the occasion very spirited, but it is the singer who sings at highest pitch and the longest line until he runs out of breath who wins the privilege of singing the next verse, and so on.

According to Kartomi's informants in west-coastal Sumatra, the highly regarded *pendendang* always sing with strong loud voices at high pitch. The main characteristics of *sikambang* song performances are their improvisatory style. Their complex ornamentation (*kembangan*) and variants of *aluk lauk* (ornamentation around a central note) are important. The singer may either be accompanied by *biola*, *bangsi*, *singkadu*, and *gandang* or be unaccompanied. The singer and the *biola* (or *bansi*, or *singkadu*) player anticipate and/or follow each other's' melodic line, but mostly they coincide at cadential points that occur at the end of melodic lines or sections (Kartomi, *ibid.*). At least, they were performed in this way at least 3 decades ago when Professor Kartomi recorded *sikambang* on Sumatra's west coast, and they were probably may performed thus for centuries past. The good performers still perform that way.

The *pendendang* Bp Anhar and many other elders in Haloban say that the most highly rated of the *pendendang sikambang* are those that fulfil at least three criteria: (i) a powerful vocal quality, determined by the singers' ability to breath in deeply and control their breath so that they can "improvise" (*improvisasi*) extended melodic phrases, (ii) the ability to remember many *pantun* and spontaneously create new ones, and (iii) the skill to render the words in a beautiful melismatic style that can touch the emotions of the listener.

To improve his ability to sing for long period of time, one *pendendang* (Bp Misri Caniago) whom I interviewed in Haloban said that he puts his thumb on the top of his mouth for a while every day for a week before performing to get rid of any phlegm in his throat. The same effect can be achieved, he said, by drinking liquid consisting of pounded leaf and coconut milk, which immediately rids the singer of any phlegm. He also knew of a way to improve a singer's ability to respond spontaneously to another singer's *pantun* - by uttering a phrase of "black magic" (H., *salimbaek*). First he uttered a rhyming couplet containing esoteric references to earrings, a mountain and locked doors opening:

Eitu anting-anting sibaranting di Gunung Asam, tujuh pintu terkunci, waroku lalu terbuka,

which translates as:

"Those dangling earrings on Mount Asam Seven locked doors were wide open,"

Then he performed the *jantik* movement by tapping his finger on the right and the left sides of his neck three times. This, he said, enables a singer easily to think of phrases with which to respond to another's *pantun*, assuring me (knowing that black magic is a crime) that "this was the way earlier generations of singers behaved."

I have chosen the following excerpt of a typical male *dendang sikambang* singer's performance which I shall now analyse.

5.8. Musical Analysis of a Male *Dendang Sikambang* Performance

I shall now present and analyse my transcription of *sikambang* performance that I recorded at the above circumcision ceremony held in Haloban on October a male *dendang* 19, 2014, and then compare it with a "secret" woman's performance. The performance by *pendendang* Bp Maslia is transcribed as follows:

Transcription 5.1: A *sikambang* excerpt, DVD excerpt 5.1 (0:01 – 0:33 seconds).

Performed by Bp Maslia Hutabarat (56 Years)
Original Recording by Ari Palawi in Haloban village, Pulau Tuangku, 19 October 2014

Length of DVD excerpt two minutes and eighteen seconds.

Tempo: free (each beat is performed at approximately MM= 40)

Transcribed at orginal pitch by: Helen Catanchin and Ari Palawi

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled "Vocal" and the bottom staff is labeled "Gandang". The vocal part uses a treble clef and the gandang part uses a bass clef. The vocal part has three melodic lines labeled "Phrase 1", "Phrase 2", and "Phrase 3". The lyrics are written below the vocal staff: "Ei" for Phrase 1, "pa di di tum buk" for the end of Phrase 1, "di pe ma tand dek" for Phrase 2, "a u lei" for the end of Phrase 2, and an unlabeled phrase for Phrase 3. The gandang part provides harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns indicated by vertical bars and dots. Measure numbers 1, 3, and 5 are marked above the vocal staff.

This performance begins with a long melismatic phrase featuring complex *bungaran* (ornamentation) on the vocable *e*, followed by a more syllabic setting to the words *padi ditumbuk di pematang dek* ("the paddy is growing and ripening"), and another bout of *bungaran* set to the word: *Au-le*, which probably refers to the name of a prince. Its melodic range is 11 semitones. It contains a very high degree of melisma (79 notes sung to 13 syllables of text), a very low number of adjacent repeated tones (8.86 %), a fairly high percentage of melodic direction changes (58.2 %?), and a moderate level shift (- 63.6 degrees), calculated on the basis of the tonal material of this excerpt, including the playful pitch variation of tones 1 and 4, as follows:

Figure 5.5: Basic Tones Material



And the:

Initial Tone (IT) = tone 5 (G#)

Final Tone (FT) = tone 1 (C#)

Highest Tone (HT) = tone 7 (B)

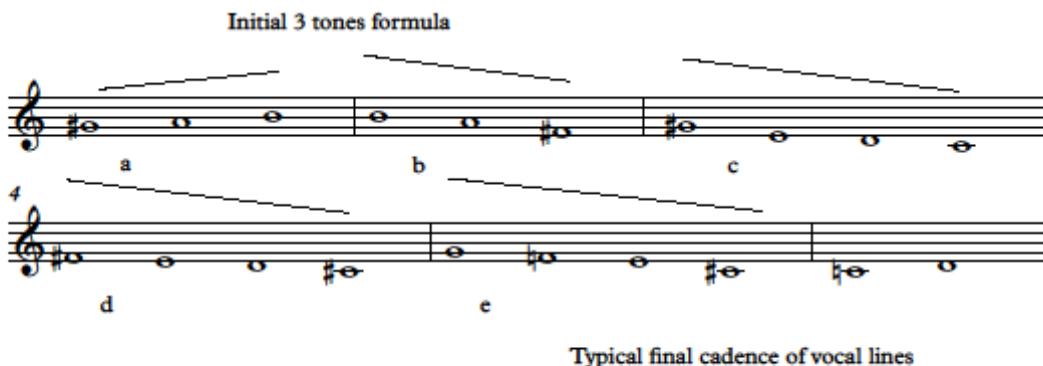
Lowest Tone (LT) = tone 1 (C#)

The vocalist improvises his melismatic vocal line on the basis of two 3-tone and three 4-tone melodic formulae that are typical of the *sikambang* tradition in Haloban, which he has aurally imbibed from childhood on, having listened to many expert singers at ceremonial functions in his lifetime (Figure 5.5).

The basic tonal material of this excerpt, including the playful pitch variation of tones 1 and 4, is as follows:

The vocalist improvises his melismatic vocal line on the basis of two 3-tone and three 4-tone melodic formulae that are typical of the *sikambang* tradition in Haloban, which he has aurally imbibed from childhood on, having listened to many expert singers at ceremonial functions in his lifetime (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Melodic formulae a – e and an extended final cadence used by the vocalist in Transcription 5.1:



5.9. Gender Relations and The Women's Secret *Dendang Sikambang* Tradition

As mentioned above, women are not permitted to sing in public. I was therefore excited when I discovered on my last field trip that young women used to sing *dendang sikambang* in secret, and some may still do so as an outlet for their emotions.

Before introducing a female performance of a *dendang sikambang*, however, I need to discuss a gender relations issue in the culture. The culture in Kepulauan Banyak is extremely male-centric. Until their mid-teens school girls and boys are allowed to dance the *baralek* dances in mixed couples, including the *tari payung* ("umbrella dance") to the accompaniment of a *pendendang* singing the *dendang sikambang* titled *lagu Pulau Pinang* ("Penang Island song") with the *biola* and *gandang*, as Margaret Kartomi and I observed and videoed in the Junior High School yard in Teluk Nibung in 2010.

However, after a young woman is married – usually at a young age, she is totally excluded from the singing and dancing in the Islanders' ceremonies and on religious and national holidays. Even though most of the Malay-style dances (namely, what the Barus west-coast dwellers call *sikambang kepri*) were clearly designed for mixed couples. the men play both the female and the male roles. When the fun begins, she goes home to cook and mind the children.

It is regarded as unseemly for a married woman or “spinster” to sing or dance in public, else it be thought she is showing off her body.

A few women choose to join choruses to sing *qasidah* to Arabic and Indonesian texts, but this tradition is not indigenous. So apart from female lullaby singing in the home, there is no outlet in the traditional performance culture for women’s creativity at all, except – I eventually learned – in secret.

I asked Ibu Rosmiani in her Asantola home whether she ever sang *sikambang* songs, and she answered that she did often create and sing responsorial *sikambang* songs with a female friend or two when they were younger, but that they always made sure that no-one was listening. When she went to the forest to collect firewood she created songs about her own extremely sad feelings when her parents arranged for her to marry someone she did not love and she had to reject the man of her choice. These songs about painful experiences, she said, were *lagu nasib* (“songs about fate”).

I asked Ibu Rosmiani to sing such a *dendang*, and she agreed, starting off very quietly and at low pitch to sing about her forced marriage decades ago, seemingly feeling very depressed as she sang (see Transcription 5.2 below). Halfway through, her companion began to weep, moved by the memories that her song aroused in her. But as Ibu Rosmiani’s voice warmed up, she started to sing at a much higher pitch and eventually she sang in a loud, clear voice in the accepted melismatic *dendang sikambang* style of her culture. She and her friend said that they enjoyed singing in secret as an outlet for their emotional responses to events in their lives, such as when a beloved family member left home to go *merantau* and never returned, when a mother is rejected by a beloved child, or when a family member died.

Now that she is an elderly woman, Ibu Rosmiani said, she no longer collects firewood in the jungle and therefore no longer sings *dendang sikambang* in secret. If that is so, she clearly has no psychological outlet with which to express her sad life experiences.

I shall now discuss **Transcription 5.2** of the above *dendang sikambang* which I recorded in Ibu Rosmiani's home in Asantola with her female friend in June 2016, after which I shall present an analysis of her vocal style compared to Bp Maslia's performance in Transcription 5.1:

Transcription 5.2: A Woman's Secret *Sikambang*,
 DVD Excerpt 5.2 (0:45 – 2:14 seconds)
 Performer(s): Ibu Rosmiani (61 Years)
 Original Recording by Ari Palawi in Asantola village, Pulau Tuangku, 16 Oktober
 2014
 Length of video excerpt three minutes twenty-six seconds
 Tempo: free, and slow (each beat is paced at approximately MM=40)
 Transcribed at original pitch by: Ari Palawi

Ibu Rosmiani sang this *dendang sikambang* excerpt in mixed Jamu-Pulo and Haloban speech varieties⁵⁰ featuring free rhythm and metre at a slow tempo with a large amount of *bungaran*, a high degree of melisma, and an overall rising level shift. After her low-pitched beginning in phrases 1-8 (bars 1-14), she began to sing loudly and clearly from phrase 6 (bar 9) as she gradually rose in pitch and dynamic level till she reached her characteristic high-pitched range and loudly carrying dynamic level in the last two phrases of the transcription (bars 19-22). Between her initial tone /tonal centre 1 (D) and her highest tone (high Ab) in the last phrase (bars 19-21) of the transcription, she rose nearly one and a half octaves (19 half-tones) in pitch.

Ibu Rosmiani sang this *dendang sikambang* excerpt in free rhythm and metre at a slow tempo with a large amount of *bungaran*, a high degree of melisma, and an overall rising level shift. After her low-pitched beginning in phrases 1-8 (bars 1-14), she began to sing loudly and clearly from phrase 6 (bar 9) as she gradually rose in pitch and dynamic level till she reached her characteristic high-pitched range and loudly carrying dynamic level in the last two phrases of the transcription (bars 19-22). Between her initial tone /tonal centre 1 (D) and her highest tone (high Ab) in the last phrase (bars 19-21) of the transcription, she rose nearly one and a half octaves (19 half-tones) in pitch. In her first four phrases (bars 1-7), her opening undulating phrase on the central tone 1 (D) and its half tone above was followed in phrase 2 by a leap to tone 6 and an undulating line with its upper and lower half-tones, ending with a descending formula on tones 5421 (Bb G Eb D), while phrases 3 and 4 undulated around the ascending and descending forms of that formula, that is tones 1245 and 5421.

⁵⁰ She began singing an emotional diphthong (“Ei”, meaning “Oh”, she said) as is usual with *dendang sikambang*, and kept repeating the diphthong between phrases, as in bars 8-9 and 16-17 above. Twice she used the word *kasih* (“love”) in the excerpt as she recounted her pain at being unable to marry the man she loved. However, not surprisingly, given her emotional state, she was unable to translate her lyric into Indonesian, and I was therefore forced to produce a phonetic transcription of her lyric in Transcription 5.2.

I shall now analyse my transcriptions of the above-mentioned male *dendang sikambang* performance that I recorded in Haloban and a and briefly compare it with the secret female *dendang sikambang* performance that I recorded in Haloban., and compare both with Kartomi's transcription of "Dendang Sikambang Tarian Anak" for voice, *biola* and *gandang*, recorded in Sibolga in 1972 (Kartomi 2012: 235-236). My conclusions will also be informed by other recordings I made of *dendang sikambang* in other villages, and with Kartomi's unpublished *sikambang* recordings that she made on the West Pasisir Malay coast between Singkil and Natal in 1972, 1981, 1982 and 1986, held in the Music Archive of Monash University.

When I compared the melismatic and other above-mentioned facets of Ibu Rosmiani's singing style in Transcription 5.2 with Bp Maslia's in Transcription 5.1, I found that essentially there is little difference between them, except that Ibu Rosmariah rose much higher in pitch and dynamic level throughout her performance than did Bp Maslia; that is, the direction of melodic movement and level shift in Ibu Rosmiani's performance was steeply ascending, while Bp Maslia's was moderately descending. However, this can be explained by Ibu Rosmiani's diffidence in the beginning of her performance and her rise in pitch and dynamics as she warmed up and gained confidence.

I also compared Bp Maslia's and Ibu Rosmiani's unaccompanied singing styles in Transcriptions 5.1 and 5.2 with Bp Hamid's style in Kartomi's Transcription10.9 of Dendang Sikambang Tarian Anak with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment, recorded in Sibolga in 1972 (Kartomi 2012: 236-237). I found that the only differences between the Haloban and Sibolga singers' styles were the harmonic implications of Hamid's melodic line which he interwove with the diatonically-tuned *biola* accompaniment, and the lack of any harmonic implications in the Haloban performances. However, the latter observation does not amount to an essential stylistic difference between them as both singers also sang ascending and descending melodies

on other occasions, as did Bp Hamid. Whether in the Islands or on Sumatra's west coast, a *dendang sikambang* singer accompanied by a violin part always adapts to it by including appropriate implied harmonies in his melodic line.

Thus, I found that Bp Maslia's and Ibu Rosmiani's styles resembled each other as well as Bp Hamid's style. All three vocalists tended to sing loudly at high pitch when warmed up, with extremely florid melodic ornamentation, slow free tempo, and metre and rhythm, even when there is an accompanying frame drum part, and the melodic-textual relationships in all three vocalists' singing are mostly exceedingly melismatic on each syllable, often with 20 or more tones sung to a syllable of text. All three singers improvise on the basis of fixed 4- or occasionally 3-tone melodic formulae that normally begin or end on the central tone, and they alternate between ascending and descending melodic directions, with overall level shifts that are normally moderately descending.

Essentially there is little difference in Ibu Rosmariah's singing style from that of Bp Maslia's (compare Transcriptions 5.1 and 5.2 above), except that Ibu Rosmariah rose much higher in pitch than Bp Maslia, which can be explained by her diffidence in the beginning and her rise in pitch and dynamics as she warmed up and gained confidence.

5.10. Conclusion

Sikambang is the name of a legend and serves as an umbrella term for the Islanders' solo and responsorial singing repertoire and song-dances with violin and frame drum accompaniment performed by expert male singers (*pendendang sikambang*) at weddings, circumcisions, and formerly at baby thanksgivings which were regularly held on Sumatra's west coast till the 1980s. The tradition resembles the ceremonial songs and song-dances with instrumental music and set of legends called *sikambang* on Sumatra's west coast between Singkil and Sibolga but differs in some ceremonial procedures and terminology. Solo *pendendang* tend to sing with

considerable carrying power at high pitch and in free metre with long melismatic, mainly descending phrases based on melodic formulae and featuring frequent melodic direction changes and overall melodic descents, while a *biola* instrumentalist plays syncretic Malay-European melodies and groups of drummers play cyclic rhythms on their frame drums (*gandang*) to accompany the male couples song-dances. Men perform all the songs and dances at the “complete (*adat*-based) and “incomplete” (*hukum*-based) ceremonies, while some women have found an outlet for their painful emotions by singing *dendang* to their own lyrics and in the same melismatic style as the men in secret, because they are deprived of most other indigenous artistic outlets.

CHAPTER SIX

ADOK, HALOBAN'S SACRED RITUAL DANCE

6.1. Introduction

As has been explained in Chapter V, the term *adok*⁵¹ generally refers to the first of the set of *sikambang* dances that the male guests at *adat*-based or *hukum*-based weddings and circumcision celebrations perform for hours into the night for entertainment in the Islands, accompanied by an ordinary *pendendang* and *gandang* player.

In the former capital of the Tuangku sultanate - Haloban, however, the dance called *adok* denotes a very different, more serious dance and performance style. Danced by a group of four men, it has a five-part lyric sung by a specially trained singer called a *penampik* who directs the dancers and accompanies himself with a very distinctive style of playing on the former “drum of sovereignty”, the *gandang*. The dance was reputedly developed during the incumbency of Haloban’s first *raja*, who is believed to have been sent to Haloban by the queen of Pagaruyung, Bundo Kanduang (BH, Mande Kandung) to found the Tuangku Kingdom at the request of Haloban’s four *datuk* (chieftains) in the 16th century, as mentioned in Chapter III. Thus, the singer of the *adok* lyric mentions the queen’s name in the lyric (quoted in Figure x below) as well as other characters in the Cindue Mato legend⁵². Successive royal families in

⁵¹ In Indonesian, *adok* literally means *adat*, which means traditional customs and “customary law, practices which have become unwritten local law” (Stevens and Schmidgal-Tellings, 2010: 7).

⁵² Cindue Mato is the legendary common warrior who eventually became king of Pagaruyung, while Bundo Kanduang, the ancestral queen of the Minangkabau people in the 15th or 16th century, is attributed with having established a system of matrilineal rule that eventually came to be based on Islamic principles. When her son eventually ruled with her, Cindue Mato appears in the legend as his personal attendant and warrior, and in due course Cindue Mato himself became king of all inland and coastal areas of Minangkabau. Cindue Mato is the name of a Minangkabau dance accompanied by a male vocalist who plays an *adok*, a deeply resonant large frame drum which begins with ponderous, widely interspersed beats but later plays a fast, continuous rhythm, suitably reflecting changing moods expressed in the song. The Haloban people believe that this dance is the centuries-old source of their *adok* dance.

Haloban needed ritual symbols to mark their sons' circumcisions and weddings, and the *adok* dance served the purpose: at circumcisions, it marked their liminal changes of status from childhood into adulthood, and at weddings from single to married status. Traditionally the performance also served as a way to attract the benign spirits of the ancestors to descend and take part in the event, thereby bringing blessings on everyone present.

A strict requirement from time immemorial was that the *adok* dance could only be performed at royal-descendants' weddings and circumcisions, which, by definition, needed to be completely *adat*-based. Hosts were also required to include the ritual slaughter of at least one buffalo for the feasting, and the celebrations had to last for several days and nights. Another requirement was that the specially trained *penampik*, who sits apart in the performance area in front of the *pelaminan*, direct the dancers and sing the sacred *adok* verses in a loudly-carrying melismatic style while playing slow, solemn, stark rhythms on the *gandang*. This large, heavy frame drum is believed to have once served as the Tuangku *raja*'s drum of sovereignty (*gandang daulat*) and the sparse, slow rhythms beaten on its edge and skin befitted its former royal status. Today, however, the musicians prefer smaller frame drums that produce a higher-pitched, sharper sound, as will be discussed below.

In fact, the function and style of the *adok* dance's drumming resembles that of the royal Malay "drums of sovereignty" called *nobat* which were once played in the presence of the king in former Malay courts on Sumatra at Pagaruyung, Aceh/Kuta Raja, Riau-Indragiri, Riau-Lingga, and Siak, and beyond.⁵³ The "drums of sovereignty" constituted the essential item of the *pusaka* (inherited possessions) in a Malay sultan's regalia, without which he could not rule.⁵⁴ Its sounds resemble Haloban's solemn *adok* music in at least four respects: the slowness and sparseness

⁵³ For further information on the drums of sovereignty in the Malay *nobat* ensembles, see Kartomi 2012:126-140, Kartomi, forthcoming.

⁵⁴ The first *nobat* in the Malay world was adopted from Middle Eastern or Moghul models by the first Muslim king in Southeast Asia, namely at Pasai in present-day east Aceh, in the 1290s (Sheppard 1962:11, B. Andaya 2011: 24-27, Kartomi 2012:126-140).

of its drum parts in the most sacred repertoire⁵⁵, the hastening of tempo near the end of a piece, the preferred loudly-carrying singing style, and the highly melismatic and free-metred vocal melodies. Like the former royal Malay *nobat* music, Haloban's royal *adok* music features slow, sparse, solemn drumming and elaborate melismatic melody, and Haloban's *gandang* is remembered as having been the sacred symbol of the king's sovereignty.

This slowness and solemnity of royal drum music is a very old tradition in Indonesia. For example, in Kepulauan Banyak's neighbouring island of Nias, the extremely slow, sacred *fogaele* dance is performed by girls and/or boys in extremely slow steps to present a gift or *sirih* offering to a descendant of the local chieftain (pers. comm., Margaret Kartomi⁵⁶). Another very slow dance in Maluku, eastern Indonesia, is performed by a warrior-dancer in front of the sultan of Ternate ((pers. comm., Margaret Kartomi)⁵⁷. And of course, the well-known Central Javanese *srimpi* and *bedoyo* dances traditionally performed by princesses in Surakarta is also very slow (see Brakel-Papenhuyzen, 1992: chapter II). However, such performances are rarely seen nowadays because their slow movements are extremely difficult and tiring to execute, and few young dancers and musicians seem to be prepared to learn the required skills.

Until recent decades, many Haloban men achieved the status of *penampik*. But unfortunately, today there are only four musicians who can still play the *adok* dance's slow, sparse rhythmic style. All four are also singers trained in all aspects of *adok* music and dance and can direct the four performers of the *adok* dance from their drum, and are therefore considered to be worthy of the title *penampik* who can perform the (pers. comm., Bp Anhar Sitanggang, September 2016).

⁵⁵ For example, the *adok* drumming resembles the sparseness of the rhythmic formulae played on the *nobat* drums in "Lagu Iskandarsyah Zulkarnaen" of the sultan of Riau-Lingga in the Riau Islands until his demise in 1911 (Kartomi, forthcoming).

⁵⁶ Kartomi recorded the *fogaele* dance in Hilisimaetano village, Kecamatan Lahusa, Kabupaten Nias Selatan on 24 January, 1972, and deposited the data in the Music Archive of Monash University/MAMU.

⁵⁷ Kartomi recorded this dance in the presence of the sultan of Ternate in Ternate on 20 December 1989 (deposited in MAMU). Also, see Kartomi 1993: 197-199.

After outlining the history of *adok* performance in Haloban since the 1950s when the tradition was still very strong and its partial decline to the present time, this chapter describes, analyses and illustrates an *adok* performance in Haloban followed by a very recent *adok* performance in Melbourne, and finally presents the lyrics sung in its five parts.

6.2. *Adok's History from the 1950s to the Present Time*

The elderly population of fisher-folk, sailors, small traders, farmers and housewives in Haloban remember that the *adok* dance and associated rituals were still regularly performed in Haloban during what they regard as the socially harmonious and relatively prosperous period of newly independent Indonesia between 1950 and 1965. As Haloban was the official capital of Kepulauan Banyak at that time, its leaders promoted the Soekarno government's directive that communities should live by the *gotong royong* ("mutual help") philosophy which Soekarno had adopted from the Indonesian archipelago's traditional philosophy and decreed that it become part of the national philosophy, *Panca Sila* (Skt., "Five Principles"). The local *adat-istiadat* also included this philosophy.

Thus, whole neighbourhoods such as Haloban's were encouraged to help build houses for each other, as well as roads, a mosque, and the like, and to save costs when running a wedding or other celebration by collaborating with each other. The previous colonial government's disapproval of the loss of working time due to the frequently week-long celebrations that the villagers enjoyed was overridden after Independence by the delicious feeling of freedom to follow the traditional modes of showing respect for the spirits of the ancestors and gaining their blessings for the good of the whole community as well as living good lives as good Muslim citizens.

The present-day elders also remember that the employment situation was relatively good, and not only in fishing and farming. As Haloban was the capital of the Islands, a number of official

government jobs were available for bright young people. Moreover, the government encouraged everyone to celebrate Indonesia's national day (17th August) and Muslim holy days - especially Idulfitri and Iduladha - with performances of the traditional local arts. At that time, I was told, the whole population could afford to request permission of the *ninik mamak* to present *adat*-based ceremonies for their domestic celebrations, and they normally won their approval. As a consequence, artists and the whole community enjoyed a rich artistic life, with frequent rehearsals and performances of the whole traditional repertoire, including the important ritual *adok* dance, at their celebrations, while the poor man's law-based ceremonies were relatively rare.

The Sitanggang and other family elders in Haloban remember that in the first half of the 1960s their little town was administered by five bright, clever, relatively well-educated men who inspired great hope in the population. They really believed that by cooperating with each other in various projects of broad social benefit that they could move together toward a prosperous future. Over the decades the best artists passed on their traditional performance skills and tenets of their *adat* philosophy to the younger generation, who, they say, are the well-informed artists and *adat* leaders of today. Even moderately well-off hosts gained in social prestige and confidence by taking advantage of the frequent opportunities to rehearse and perform at life event celebrations and on national days and Idul Fitri, which contributed to the general atmosphere of hope for a bright communal future. Many people, young and old, could also sing, dance, or play musical instruments.

The fly in the ointment, however, was that all the five administrators, including the Assistant Wedana who reported to the Wedana in Singkil,⁵⁸ happened to be members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

With the establishment of Suharto's anti-Communist New Order regime in 1965-1966, Haloban's harmonious *gotong royong* mentality was seriously interrupted (pers.comm., Ridwan Sitanggang, June 2014). Haloban's five government leaders were accused of being members of the then perfectly legal Indonesian Communist Party, PKI, which the New Order regime was determined to destroy throughout the nation. The five leaders were rounded up and presumably killed, for they were never heard of again. At the same time, the Suharto government punished Haloban by withdrawing its status as the capital of the Islands. A new capital was established at Pulau Balai village, on the much smaller Balai Island.

The ensuing power vacuum in Haloban had dire consequences for the descendant of the raja of Tuangku Kingdom. His power was usurped a few years later by Sutan Umar, whose ancestor two generations before was indirectly related to the last raja (his younger brother-in-law). Umar took possession of and sold the pusaka (sacred inherited objects of sovereignty), the silsilah (family tree documents) and lands belonging to the descendants of the real sultan, retaining only a sword and a colonial era letter from the Dutch Residen (Resident) in Singkil, which he kept as pusaka, and set himself up as a "pretender sultan." He eventually managed to be appointed camat (administrative leader) of Haloban, and also appointed members of his family to other official positions, with the result that the camat today is still a member of Sutan Umar's family, and his relatives dominate local economic as well as political matters and represent Haloban to the Bupati in Singkil to this day.

⁵⁸ *Wedana* was the term for the government head in Singkil during the Dutch colonial era, and the term persisted in Soekarno era. From 1966 the term was changed to Bupati, and the government heads of districts such as Kepulauan Banyak were called *camat*.

Meanwhile the real descendant of the last raja – Sutan Dharma Bakti (known by his nickname Bp Tatin) lost all his ancestral possessions; and despite his hard work as the farmer-head of his family, he was unable to afford to hold an adat ceremony with the adok dance for his own family ceremonies. I interviewed his younger brother in 2014, Bp Gunawan Sakti Alam, whom left Haloban for Singkil where he died in 2016. He convinced me that the implementation of adat practices may be impossible in future.

Today the families whom I grew most to respect in my visits since 2010 still talk fondly of the five men who administered the affairs of Haloban in the early 1960s. They are remembered as leaders who had the people's interests at heart and were working to build up everyone's self-respect and standard of living.

The *adok* dance continued to be performed at *adat*-based ceremonies in Haloban during the Suharto and *Reformasi* (post-Suharto “Reformation”) eras, but it was virtually unknown outside this small town. Eventually performances became rarer, especially after the soft power of the *raja*-descendant family declined suddenly in 2010, as I shall now briefly explain.

In the past nine years, only two hosts obtained permission to present *adat*-based *baralek* in Haloban, one of which was based on interference in the *ninik mamak*'s decision-making procedures. All other hosts since then were forced to present *hukum*-based weddings and circumcisions due to their inability to fulfil the financial conditions.

In the *adat*-based *baralek* in 2014 its host succeeded in obtaining the *ninik mamak*'s permission to hold it; as he was relatively wealthy (owning a fish distributing business) he could fulfil all the financial and other conditions.

However, the other *baralek adat* was much more controversial, as it involved dubious machinations of the family of the “pretender raja”. When the prospective host put his proposal to hold an *adat*-based wedding to the *ninik mamak*, which comprises representatives of nearly

all the families in Haloban, he was refused permission on the grounds that the bride and groom had broken the *adat-istiadat* rules by becoming engaged without the permission of both groups of parents. However, the main unstated reason for the *ninik mamak*'s refusal was the fact that the host was a family member of the unpopular "pretender sultan" who had appropriated their lands and other wealth in Haloban, and would therefore not cooperate in the arrangements in the normal *gotong royong* fashion. Clearly, an *adat*-based ceremony needs to involve most of families in this very small town. So, the host appealed to the government-administered *mukim* (Muslim parish) within the *kecamatan* structure, the head of which is a relative of the "pretender raja" family. In this way, he obtained the desired permission over the heads of the *ninik mamak*. When the *adat*-based wedding was held, the *camat* ensured that government resources made up for the lack of *gotong royong* value. The full proceedings included a performance of the *adok* dance by a local *sanggar* (group of artists funded by a political party at election time). As the villagers' livelihood depended on preserving relations with the government, some contributed to the event and attended with heavy hearts. To them the episode showed how *adat* privileges can be bought, which is illegal according to traditional law, and it brought fears that the young people would lose respect for the *adat* traditions.⁵⁹

I shall now describe an *adok* performance of the five-part *adok* dance based on videos of (i) a performance in the mystical, sacral atmosphere of a fully *adat*-based circumcision ceremony (*I. sunat rasul*) held from the 3rd to the 8th of April, 2007, and hosted by Bp Ridwan Sitanggang in Haloban in April 2007 (see **DVD Excerpt 6.1**)⁶⁰ and (ii) a stage performance of the same *adok* dance recorded in the more clinical atmosphere of a stage in Melbourne on 28 September 2016 (see **DVD Excerpt 6.2**). The performances are led by a *penampik* (an expert *adok* singer

⁵⁹ Information in this paragraph has been obtained by interviews with members of the Sitanggang and other families in Haloban who do not wish to be named.

⁶⁰ Permission to reproduce this video in my thesis was kindly given by Bp Anhang Sitanggang, whose brother was the host of this *sunatan* (circumcision) ceremony in Haloban in 2013.

and *gandang* player) who sings a 5-part text in mixed Haloban and Jamu Malay during which the boy to be circumcised, or the bridegroom at his wedding, and his three companions perform the dance, which usually lasts for at least 30 minutes at a *baralek*.⁶¹

6.3. Description of an Adok Dance Performance in Haloban in 2007

Wearing a satin trouser-suit (M. *teluk belanga*) and sarong, the *penampik*, enters the host's front room and sits cross-legged in front of the *pelaminan* holding his *gandang* upright on his lap. Hundreds of paper and cloth decorations hang over the *pelaminan* ("throne" for the *anak yang akan disunat* or the boy to be circumcised) on the left and from the ceiling of the host's home. Closing his eyes to concentrate, the *penampik* takes a deep breath and sings the elaborately melismatic phrases of the introductory lyric in a loudly-carrying voice, beginning with the locally pronounced Arabic phrase *Bismillah irrahmanir Rahim* ("In God's name"), which is followed by a lyric in mixed Haloban and Jamu Malay about the *gotong royong* help given to the host to present the *baralek* (see the complete lyrics in **Figure 6.6** at the end of this chapter).⁶²

As in other *dendang sikambang* singing (see Chapters V and VI), his style features a high degree of melodic direction change, a low degree of adjacent tonal repetition, and a negative level shift. In the accepted local singing style, the *penampik* frequently tends to revolve around the central tone of the phrase by leading up to it with a melodic ascent, twice reiterating a turn ending on it, then after ascending to a higher note, immediately descending to the central tone

⁶¹ The main interlocutor for this chapter is Bp Anhar Sitanggang, whose performances as *penampik* director I have witnessed in Haloban in 2014 and Melbourne in 2016.

⁶² Because linguistic studies of Haloban's classic language with its Bahasa Haloban –Melayu Jamu mix, is only beginning to be studied by a team of linguists led by Professor Robert Amery of Flinders University, I was unable to obtain a full translation of the *adok* lyric which was kindly transcribed with assistance from Bp Anhar Sitanggang. Even he was unable to translate it into Indonesian because it contains a number of obsolete words.

again, followed by a repeated descent to the lowest tone, as shown in **Transcription 6.1** and its melos below.⁶³

Transcription 6.1: The opening vocal phrase of the *adok* lyric in the Haloban-Melayu Jamu speech variety, with its melos (abstract of a melody minus adjacent repeated tones) and tonal hierarchy, DVD excerpt 6.1 (0:12 – 0:24)

Performed by Bp. Ridwan Sitanggang (53 years)

Original DVD recorded in Haloban, Pulau Tuangku, 3 April 2007.

Length of video excerpt thirty minuets and fifty-three seconds

Tempo: MM = 40

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled "Gandang" and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a treble clef and a common time signature (indicated by a '2'). The lyrics "a lu ae i - - si dang ku e i" are written below the notes. A bracket above the notes is labeled "PHRASE 1". The bottom staff is also labeled "Gandang" and has a key signature of three sharps (B major). It features a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics "se ga rak sigam po ra yo" are written below the notes. Brackets above the notes are labeled "PHRASE 2" and "PHRASE 2a (coda)". Both staves include a measure number "4" at the beginning.

Figure 6.1: Melos of the Phrases

⁶³ This vocal excerpt, based on a notational melos which the singer renders in an ornamental style, revolves around 4 important tones – the initial tone (solfa tone 5, C#), final tone (3, A#), highest tone (3.A#) and lowest tone (3, A#) in the performance. The hierarchy of tones in this transcribed performance arranged in scalewise fashion below includes: the central tone, which for easy recognition I have notated as a semibreve; the second most important tone which I have notated as a minim; and the other notes, including the the “leading note” to the central and secondary main tones, which I have notated as a black note. The tones are notated in both Western staff notation and in the solfa-like number script which local musicians can read. The melody begins with a formulaic melodic ascent in phrase 1 on tones 5 6 1/1 leading up to the tonal centre, tone 1 (F#), which is emphasised by the reiterated melodic turns that ensue around it, then following a brief ascent to the highest tone (3), two more melodic turns emphasise the central tone, followed by the motivic descent on 6 5 4 3 to the lowest tone (3) and its repeat on tones 5 4 3.



Melos: *PHRASE 1* *PHRASE 2* *PHRASE 2a*

Figure 6.2: The tonal hierarchy



At the end of the opening unaccompanied melodic line, the *penampik* then beats out a single *ba* sound on the taut edge of his *gandang* followed by a deep *dum* sound, and gradually he builds up a motivically-based rhythmic line on these and other timbres. The rhythmic style is noted for its sparseness compared to other *gandang* playing in the Islands.

Meanwhile the boy to be circumcised (*anak yang akan disunat*) and his three companions enter the dance arena and stand with a modest downward gaze in a square formation.⁶⁴ They are barefooted, have henna-stained fingers⁶⁵, and wear a dark-coloured long-sleeved coat and trouser suit each with a *kain songket* (M., sarong of *songket* material)⁶⁶ wrapped around the waist over their trousers. The *anak yang akan disunat* wears an elaborate *adat* costume with a two-metre long, red and gold *selendang songket* (M., scarf of *songket* material) crossing diagonally over his chest and hanging down his back, and a ca. 50-centimetre high, three-tier pyramidal-shaped head-dress with tassles hanging from the top. One of his companions, who

⁶⁴ In the Melbourne performance, however, they kneeled on one leg.

⁶⁵ On the previous night, the *adok* dancers join the boy to be circumcised or the bridal couple at a wedding whose fingernails and arms are stained with henna designs.

⁶⁶ A *songket* (M) is a luxury silk or cotton cloth woven with a supplementary gold or silver metal weft (Kartomi 2012: 430)

is quite elaborately dressed, holds a goblet-shaped tray (H., *sarana*)⁶⁷ containing offerings covered with yellow, red, white and pink textiles⁶⁸ and an embroidered, square cover on top. Another companion wears a simpler, less colourful costume and a black velvet *peci* (ca. 4 cm-high), with a very long *selendang* crossing over his chest and down his back, which he will playfully manipulate in the dance. The other companion is also more simply dressed and wields a medium-sized fan in his right hand. The *anak yang akan disunat* leaves the ends of his *selendang* hanging as he raises both arms and begins to flutter his fingers in a characteristic movement of the dance.

The *penampik* then sings the first *pantun*, which comprises a pair of rhyming couplets to greet the *anak yang akan disunat*, elders and guests, and serves to introduce Part II of the lyric and dance, titled *Cabik-Cabik*. This is also the name of a standard *adok* dance movement (*gerak*) performed by the two dancers wearing a *selendang*, who on hearing the *penampik* sing the directive, pick up and stretch out the ends of the long scarf with arms wide open.

Meanwhile the four dancers, who have been standing very still on their corner of the square dance formation, begin to perform the uncommonly slow movements of the *adok* dance. At times, they all rotate on the spot, face to the left then the right, and take a step forwards or backwards and return to their basic positions. Sometimes all four dancers face inwards and step forward to create a close circle, then step back into their corner again. The *anak yang akan disunat* and the other dancer wearing a *selendang* perform the slow, expansive *cabik-cabik* arm movements, while the dancer holding the hourglass-shaped tray of offerings moves it up, down and sideways, and the dancer holding a fan flutters it periodically.

⁶⁷ A similar goblet-shaped tray is called a *cerano* in Pagaruyung. The term *cerano* is also understood in Haloban.

⁶⁸ The yellow cloth symbolises royalty, the red cloth symbolises the bravery of Cindue Mato and other heroes, the white cloth symbolises the *imam* (mosque prayer leader) and the *ulama* (Muslim scholars), and the pink cloth represents the *rakyat* (M., I., the common people).

Meanwhile the *penampik* sings ever more complex and lengthy melismatic phrases to the established lyric, and his sparse, formulaic but freely varied interlocking rhythmic lines on the main drum focus on the sounds referred to onomatopoeically as *dum* and *ba* (as explained in Chapter III).

After a pause, Part II of the dance, titled *Ayun Kumbang* (“sway the flower,” which is a metaphor for a baby), begins. The *penampik* sings a melismatic *buai sikambang* (lullaby) to a lyric that induces its listeners into a peaceful, calm state. In the last line of the second pantun in Part III, titled *Erang-erang* (meaning unknown), the *penampik* refers to Made Kanduang (*alias* Bundo Kanduang), the ancestral queen of Pagaruyung, thus linking the performance to Haloban’s royal ancestral legend.

After another pause, Part 4, titled *Datang-datang* (“arriving”), begins. The *penampik* sings a lyric which translates as “The *gandang* sounds, welcome *rantau-rantau* (emigrants) back to your home village”. After the final pause, Part IV, titled *Mayam Panjang* (meaning unknown), begins, with the lyric referring to a meeting of the elders in the *balai* (pavilion) watching a lively *randai* dance. Near the end of Part V, the dancer holding the *sarana* hands it to the boy to be circumcised as a mark respect for his change of status from boyhood to adulthood.⁶⁹

The following collage of photographs - **Figure 6.3.1 to 6.3.2** (album 1) - shows the four *adok* dancers in full ceremonial costume performing at the circumcision (*sunat rasul*) ceremony in Haloban while the *penampik* sings and plays his *gandang* on the side in front of the *pelaminan* (not shown): see **DVD excerpt 6.1**. Hundreds of paper and cloth decorations hang over the *pelaminan*/throne on the left and from the ceiling of the host’s home.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ At a wedding, on the other hand, the bridegroom’s change of status would of course be from single to married status.

⁷⁰ This scene and performance are very similar to the *nikah-kawin* (BH, “wedding”) ceremony at which the bridegroom is honoured.



Figure 6.3.1 (top left): LEFT: The *anak yang akan disunat* on the left stands holding his arms down at each side and flutters the fingers of his two raised hands. FRONT: the dancer crouches on one knee with the other stretched backwards and slowly lowers his hands on each side of his body. BACK: the dancer crouches and flutters his fan occasionally. RIGHT: the dancer crouches and rotates his hands occasionally.

Figure 6.3.2 (top right): LEFT: The dancer steps forward very slowly in an anticlockwise direction, occasionally moving the *sarana* held in his right hand in different directions. FRONT: the dancer flicks the ends of his *selendang* across his chest as he steps forward very slowly. BACK: the *anak yang akan disunat* steps very slowly forward in an anticlockwise circle. RIGHT: the dancer waves his fan as he steps forward very slowly.

Figure 6.3.3 (bottom left): LEFT: The *anak yang akan disunat* steps very slowly around a circle in anticlockwise direction. FRONT: the dancer steps slowly forward moving the *cerano* in different directions. BACK: the dancer moves his fan up and down as he steps forward. RIGHT: the companion of the *anak yang akan disunat* holds his hand behind his back as he steps forward slowly.

Figure 6.3.4 (bottom right): LEFT: The *anak yang akan disunat* is moving into a semi-kneeling position as he begins to stretch out the ends of his *selendang*. FRONT: the dancer lowers the *sarana* in his right hand and raises his left arm horizontally across his chest. RIGHT: the dancer is moving into a semi-

kneeling position as he slowly rotates his hands. BACK: the dancer lowers his right arm and raises his left arm horizontally across his chest.

The *adok* dance can of course be performed on a stage, but such a performance naturally loses its authentic atmosphere outside the context of a ritual ceremony

6.4. Description of an Adok Dance on a Concert Stage in Melbourne

The performance of part V of this *adok* dance on a concert stage in Melbourne on 28th September 2016 was directed by Haloban's main *penampik*, Bp Anhar Sitanggang (see DVD excerpt 6.2). The dancer portraying the *anak yang akan di sunat* and three other dancers stand still in a diamond-shaped formation, carrying their weight on their left foot, and resting their raised right heel on the floor as they each make very slow movements of their arms, hands and fingers. Instead of ceremonial costumes, they each wear a long white shirt over black trousers, a black Muslim-style *peci* (cap), and shoes.



Figure 6.4: The four *adok* *Haloban* dancers performing in standing position at a concert at Monash University on 28 September, 2016, with the seated *penampik* on the right singing and playing his *gandang* (not shown). See DVD excerpt 6.2.

LEFT: The dancer on the left puts the *sarana* that he is carrying on the floor, puts the heel of his left hand with fingers raised on his left knee, and rotate his other hand with fingers outstretched.

FRONT: The dancer at the front leaves the ends of his *selendang* hanging as he raises both arms and begins to flutter his fingers in a characteristic movement of the dance

BACK The dancer at the back takes one end of the *selendang* around his neck with his right-hand fingers and is about to take the other end with his left-hand fingers so that he can fully open out his *selendang* in front of him with both hands

RIGHT: The dancer on the right holds and flutters his fan in his right hand as he raises the fingers of his left hand as a dance gesture.

The *anak yang akan di sunat* and three other dancers then sit cross-legged on the left leg with the right leg raised a little higher than the left, and each dancer performs his own distinctive, slow movements of the arms, hands and fingers, as shown in **Figure 6.5**.



Figure 6.5: The four *adok Haloban* dancers perform in sitting position at a concert at Monash University on 28 September, 2016, with the *pendendang* seated on the right singing and playing his *gandang* (not shown).

LEFT: The dancer on the left holds the *sarana* in his left hand and flutters the fingers of his right hand.

FRONT: The dancer at the front raises his arms and periodically flutters his fingers.

BACK: The dancer at the back wearing a long *selendang* around his neck is about to perform the *cabik-cabik* movement by taking hold of the ends of the *selendang* with the fingers of both hands so that he can fully open it out in front of him with arms outstretched.

RIGHT: The dancer on the right moves his fan down to floor level before raising it again in continuing motion for a minute or so.

Because the movements of the dancers are directed by the commands within the lyrics sung by the *penampik*, it is important to know the lyrics that he sings in the dance's five parts, transcribed below.

6.5. The Lyrics in Bahasa Haloban – Bahasa Jamu sung by the *Penampik* in an *Adok* Performance in Haloban, transcribed by Bp Anhar Sitanggang, Haloban, on 10 July, 2016.

The following transcription of the five-parts of the *adok* lyrics as they are performed in the Haloban– Melayu Jamu speech variety were kindly transcribed by Bp Anhar Sitanggang, Haloban, on 10 July, 2016. It should be noted that successive repeated vowels, as in *ujuuuung* (*ujung*, “corner), indicate that the word is usually sung to a melismatic phrase. It must also be emphasised that because linguistic studies of the Haloban –Melayu Jamu speech variety is only beginning to be studied (by a team of linguists led by Professor Robert Amery of Flinders University), I was unable to obtain a full translation of the *adok* lyrics which were kindly transcribed by Bp Anhar Sitanggang. Even he was unable to translate it all into Indonesian because it contains a number of obsolete words. The general sense of the lyrics is presented in the description on pages 115 and 116.

Figure 6.6: The complete lyrics of the *adok* performance

Introduction

Bismillah irrahmani rahim

Uei uei sidang kuei sigarak sigma po rayo langkuei dibanto dalam
siang tagarak hari sanjo duduk maulei tanga malam

Yahaiyun yakaiyun Bismillah bukan mangaji

Bismillah manapik adok malinta kapalo nandi mengadang ujuuuung dang
Dang kumbang lahei

I. Cabik Cabik

Cabik cabik kaindibali
Dietotanga tigoeto
Mintak tabik kami banyanyi
jangan dibilang kurang baso

II. Ayun Kumbang

Ayun kumbang lakumbangei
Ohon dei yo dang di dendang allahoi dendang
yo dang di dendang sikandung ba laba danei yo mantawa alli dandam ladan damei
lahei

Ohondei masak dangtarapung
ditapiiiian sarou labadanei
masak dangtarapung sikandungba labadanei lahei
Ohondei hari dangko apo
Bulan kujadiii sarou laba danei, hari dangko apo sikandung ba laba danei yo bulan ku
jadi dandam ladan damei lahei

Ohondei sabab dang mananggung damikian sarao labadanei
sabab dang managgung sikandungba labadanei yodambakian dandam ladan damei
lahei

Ohondei tapandang sigumarang
allahoinandong nandi nandong
kok alangtujuo sikandungba labadanei yotapandang sigumarang
allaho inandong ambik kain

III. Erang-erang

Erang erang jambu erang
katigo erang jambu ai
jangan tuan baberang berang
kok utang samo di bai
Takapalo manabang tonggak
sinantatabang bulu batung
Nangkok sayo dilamun lamun ombak, sinan takana Mande Kandung

IV. Datang-Datang

Datang-datang kini nei yo pundatang
Lenggo bayu kininbana yo rajo, rajo embangan
Bumi hangui kininbana yo langik langik tapanggang
Bakucak alam kininbana yo karano nyo
Babunyi gandang kininbana yo sala salamonyo
Elok liuknyo kininbana yo rantau-rantau sialang

V. Mayuam Panjang

Mayuam panjang kinin sayang.
Oi dangsi panjang kini duduk ladi balei
Bua palo kinin sayang.
Duduk mambilang kini la bua palo
Oi namun candei kini sayang.

Bago tajelo kini lanamun candei
Kaka palo kini sayang
Rusuk dipinggang kini kakapalo
Oi urangrantikan kini sayang
Sadang rancaknyo kini tari labaranti

6.6. Conclusion

This unique *adok* dance and ritual stands out in Haloban's *sikambang* culture for the very slow pace and solemnity of its performance style; its elaborate, loudly carrying melismatic singing style, its tendency to focus on a central tone with turns around it, its sparse rhythmic patterns on the typically small frame drum; the distinctive roles of the four dancers, their ultra-slow dance movements, and the social taboo imposed by the *ninik mamak* elders who may prevent a host from presenting a fully *adat*-based ceremony.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LANGSER, HALOBAN'S MALAY-EUROPEAN HYBRID

7.1. Introduction

Langser, or *Langser Madam*, is a hybrid couples' dance that combines Malay *joget*-like steps and Jamu-Pulo *sikambang* music with various European elements, as will be explained below. It is directed by a *komandir* (caller) who calls out instructions to the dancing couples in a patois of Jamu Pulo Malay and corrupt Dutch (see the Transcription and Glossary of terms at the end of this chapter), though the callers say the dancers no longer understand the actual words of the calls.

As I shall argue below, the dance's name, *langser*, may derive from the late 19th century European *lancer* dance, a subset of the *quadrille*. Furthermore, its dance formations and steps and the role of the caller may not only derive from the 18th-19th century European *lancer*- and *quadrille* dances but also from the Portuguese *branyo* folk dances⁷¹ transplanted into Melaka during the Portuguese empire in Southeast Asia (1511-1641) (see Sarkissian 2006: 100-101). Local interlocutors say that *langser*'s Dutch components came to the Islands through a mysteriously circuitous route, and their various stories will be considered below.

As noted in Chapter V, the taboo on women appearing on stage in the Islands prevents the *sikambang* couples dances from being performed as they were originally intended – by mixed couples - at weddings, circumcisions, Lebaran, and national celebrations. Instead they are usually performed only by men, who assume both the male and the female roles. Sometimes, however, an adult will teach final year primary school boys and girls to perform the dances in

⁷¹ *Branyo* folk dances from the village of Portuguse descendants in Melaka/Malacca are usually accompanied by a *rebana* (frame drum) and *biola* (violin) in a rhythm and beat similar to Malay *joget* music.

mixed couples. For example, in 2010 we recorded final year primary school girls and boys in Teluk Nibung presenting a beautiful performance of *tari payung* (the “umbrella dance”) (see **DVD Excerpt 7.1**), with their teachers accompanying them on the *biola* and *gandang* playing *Lagu Pulau Pinang* (“The Penang Island Song”) in a very similar style to the transcription of that song recorded by Kartomi in Sibolga (Kartomi 2012: 228).



Figure 7.1: A performance of the *tari payung* (“umbrella dance”) by final year primary school (*sekolah dasar*) students in Teluk Nibung in 2010. Photo: Ari Palawi

The same thing happened with the first performance of the *langser* dance that is discussed in this chapter. This dance is usually performed by all male couples at the end of an evening of *sikambang* dancing such as the one I recorded in Haloban at the end of a whole evening of *dendang sikambang* song-dances in June 2010 (**DVD Excerpt 7.2**). Below I shall describe and analyse *langser*’s dance formations, steps, caller instructions, and music, and then compare it with the performance by girl-boy couples which I recorded in Haloban on the third day after Lebaran Haji (Idul Adha) in 2014. Like the 2010 performance of *tari payung*, the latter

performance was danced by a group of final year primary school girls and boys who were trained in its correct movements and formations in a week of intensive rehearsals to celebrate the homecoming of a Haloban-born *perantau* emigrant), with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment (**DVD Excerpt 7.3**).

This chapter opens with descriptions and analyses of (i) an all-male *langser* performance and (ii) a mixed-sex performance, both of which were recorded in Haloban in June 2010 and July 2014 respectively. After commenting on the *komandir*'s instructions, it compares the *langser*/ *langser madam* performance tradition with that of the related *balanse madam* dance tradition practised by Nias descendants in Sumatran west-coastal Kuta Padang, and explains the dance's highly probable links with the 18th-19th century European *lancer* and *quadrille* dances. The chapter concludes with the hypothesis that the syncretic histories and character of both dances are attributable to the long complex process of transculturation that resulted from Malay-European contact from the early colonial era across the centuries.

7.2. An All-Male Performance of *Langser* in Haloban in 2010

The performance we recorded in 2010 began with eight all-male couples standing in two parallel lines about two metres apart, with the “male-role dancers” on the left facing each other and the “female-role dancers” on the right (if viewed from the audience in front). They were wearing a *baju koko* (BH.), or *baju Islam* (BI.), consisting of dark trousers, a knee-length *kain songket*, white long-sleeved high-collared shirts, a *selendang* (long scarf) around their shoulders, and a *peci* cap (**Figure 7.2**), and the female-role dancers had added earrings or other female items to match the *melambai* (female-style) hand movements (as opposed to the *jantan* [male-style movements]) that they would perform. The *komandir* (announcer) stood at midpoint between the two lines and periodically called out commands to all the dancers to group in certain formations, or change from one to another – e.g. from the formation in two parallel lines to a large circle, or to two concentric circles and back again, and at the high point

– to step between the different paths they were directed to take in a complex maze-like activity.

As our interlocutor Bp Anhar Sitanggang said, some of the announcements were in Malay, while others were in corrupted Dutch, or a combination of Malay and Dutch. However, this is perhaps not surprising, he said, because Dutch is no longer understood in Haloban today, more than seventy years after the Dutch were forced to end their occupation of the former Netherlands East Indies.



Figure 7.2: All-male dancers in Haloban wearing white “European-style” coats and trousers plus parts of a *baju koko* or *baju Muslim* comprising Malay sarongs and *peci* caps in the *langser* couples’ dance in front of a *palaminan* (ceremonial couch) with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment. Video still by Ari Palawi in Haloban, June, 2010.

The *biola* player was 56-year old Bp Ridwan Sitanggang who played his diatonically-tuned home-made violin, using only the first position, to produce a typical *sikambang*-style melodic line (**Transcription 7.1**). He said he “improvised” his melodic phrases over the metre and repetitive rhythms established by the *gandang* leader and his score of *gandang* musicians. He based his melodic invention in Transcription 8.1 on the following mainly ascending melodic formulae: tones 1 4 5 6 5 (A D E F# E), and the descending formula 4 3 2 1 (D C# B A). The

dancers danced to the tempo set up by the lead *gandang* player, who kept to a medium tempo throughout until he increased the tempo to fast then very fast at the end of the dance. He also led the group of *gandang* players who played repetitive rhythmic motifs in unison such as: //: *dum . . ba / dum . ba . / dum . . ba* // to accompany the amplified *biola* melody (Transcription 7.1).

Transcription 7.1: *Langser* music played on *biola* and *gandang*. Tempo: MM 60.

Opening fragment (0:00 - 0:23 seconds) from DVD Excerpt 7.2

Transcribed at original pitch by Ari Palawi.

Original recording by Ari Palawi in Haloban village, 17 July 2010.

Performed by Bp Ridwan Sitanggang (*biola*) and around 20 *gandang* players.

According to my main interlocutor in Haloban, Bp Anhar Sitanggang, the *komandir* called out instructions in Malay, Dutch or a combination of both languages to the two sets of four couples dancing before him. Some were commands to one couple while the others were to change to certain other dance movements or formations. One of the common commands in Malay was: *pasang aksi* (lit. “couple action”), implying “mark time on the spot”, which was addressed to the parallel rows of male-role dancers on the left and female-role dancers on the right (see **Figure 7.2**) who moved forward and formed couples with their partners.

7.2.1. The *Langser* Dance Instructions and Floor Formations

First the *komandir* directed the male-role dancers to form a line on the left facing the female-role dancers (*dahmisen*) who formed a parallel row on the left, as in **Figure 7.3**, while he himself moved from one end to the other to advise any dancers who needed help what to do (as indicated by the blue arrows in Figure 7.3). He called out *balangser madam* (lit. “woman dance the *langser*”), instructing them to “join your partner and dance the *langser*, madam”.

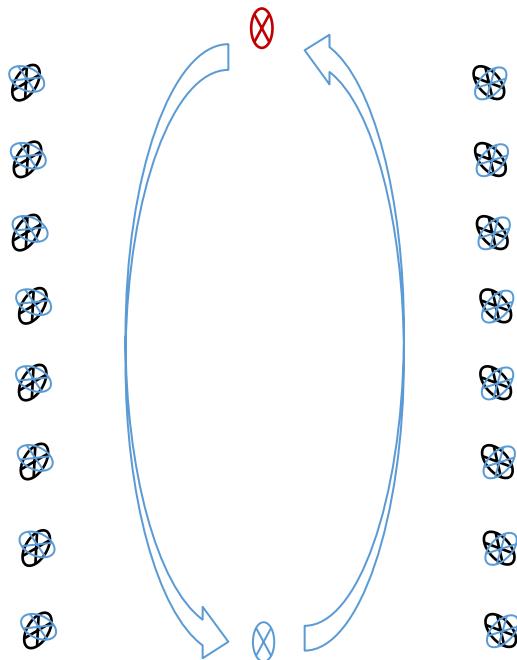


Figure 7.3: The first *langser* formation

The dancers then moved into the second formation on hearing the *komandir*'s next instruction: *end suker dames end kufelen tubor*, meaning each male-role dancer should dance in turn toward his female-role partner and form a couple, until all eight couples were formed (see **Figure 7.4**). Then they followed the *komandir*'s next instruction: *dah di dames*, meaning the male-role dancers must swing their partners [the *dames*] back and forth alternately to the left and the right while moving their arms back and forth as well. Then after hearing his next instruction: *ambu*

dikate, meaning “mark time”, they swung their hands back and forth while marking time (see

Figure 7.4).

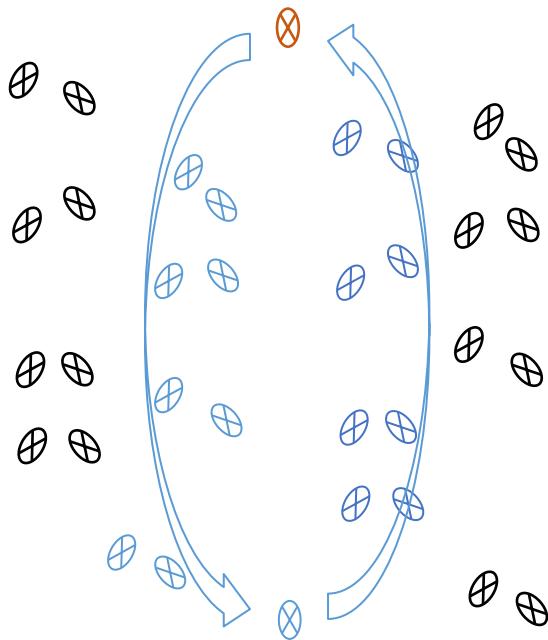


Figure 7.4: The second and third *langser* formations

Although the dancers performed in a lively, free manner, their dance formations on the dance floor were quite recognisable. The *tukang biola* played the same melodic phrases as before, repeated them again and again, and added some melodic ornamentation (*bungaran*), which made the audience want to jump up and *balangser* with them – and this they did. The *gandang* player made the atmosphere even more infectious as he played the repetitious rhythm:

//: dum . . ba . /dum . ba . / dum . . ba . :// as in Transcription 7.1.

The *komandir* kept moving between the dancers, sometimes circling around them, sometimes crossing their paths diagonally, or standing in one corner or another in order to observe them and correct their movements when the dancers forgot the routines. When the *komandir* said *tuber*, the couples understand that they must hold each other and dance in a circle; when he called out *lastrei sesoplat*, each dancer left his partner and returned across the floor toward his

own group; and when the *komandir* called out *dahmisen* (“women”), all the female-role dancers as well as the male-role dancers knew to return to their parallel lines in orderly fashion as in the beginning.

Then the *komandir* called out *balangser dames*, and the line of female-role dancers moved toward their partners on the left, all the while performing *joget* movements. Meanwhile, the line of male-role group dancers moved to the right. Then the *komandir* said *refdrum* (“circle to the right”), and they all moved into the fourth formation, extending their hands upwards and holding hands while swaying together and circling around the arena. When the *komendir* called out *koa*, the dancers formed a large circle (the fifth formation, see **Figure 7.5**) and on hearing him call: *eng eng koa* meaning “narrow the circle”, they all moved inwards to form a much narrower circle as in the blue configuration in Figure 7.5. When the *komandir* said *alfo* (meaning “repeat”), they moved outwards again, after which they repeated the inward and outward movements several times.

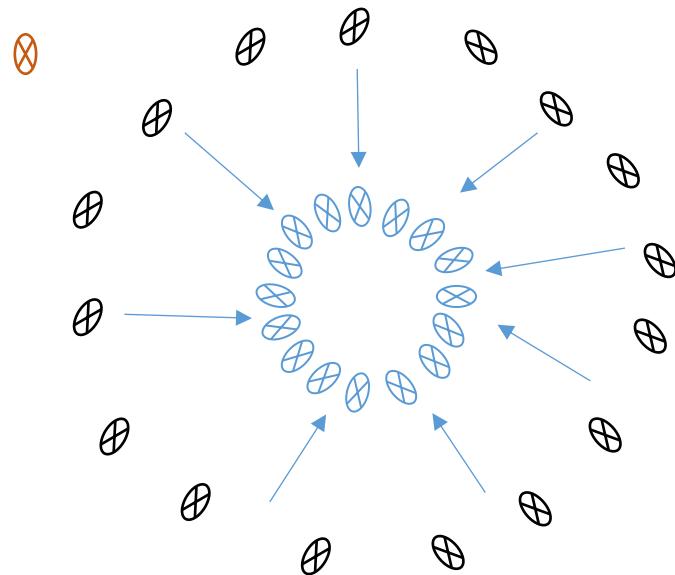


Figure 7.5: The fourth and fifth *langser* formations

Other calls to the dancers asked them in Malay to try and “improve” their dance style. For example, the *komandir* called out: *Jang kagak seperti batu*, meaning “Don’t dance like a stone!” (where *jang* is a diminutive of *jangan* (BI., meaning “don’t”) and *goyang seperti kayu* “Sway [gracefully] like a tree [in the wind]”. Sometimes the *komandir*’s calls began with a corruption of a Dutch word such as *dahmisen* (from *dames*, Dutch), meaning “ladies”, or he spoke in Malay, e.g. *engkau* meaning “you!” (BI. *engkau*), and *pasang aksi*, meaning “mark time on the spot”.

Finally, the dancers returned to the initial formation and on hearing the directive *lastrei sesoplat*, released each others’ hands. While the *biola* and *gandang* players increased the tempo of their playing and the *komandir* called out: *lastrei* followed by *dahmisen*, the dancers circled back to their respective partners. Then with the musicians playing at an extremely fast tempo, the *komandir* called out *balangser dames* as in the beginning of the dance, and the male-role dancers danced back to form their line on the left while the female-role dancers returned to their parallel row on the right.

Some instructions were in Malay, such as *kembali*, meaning “return to your earlier spot”. Others were derived from the Dutch, such as: *rum van drum*, meaning “rotate in the circle”, and *reeturne* or *rechts rum*, meaning “turn to the right”, and yet others combined Malay and Dutch as in: *kembali ra rum*, meaning “go back and turn around” (*kembali*, Malay: “go back”, *ra rum*, Dutch: “turn around”). See Bp Anhar’s transcription of one *komandir*’s set of instructions and a glossary of commonly used *langser* terms in section 8.4 – at the end of this chapter.

7.2.2. Possible Origins of *Langser*

We came away from the *langser* performances wondering how an apparently European-influenced couples dance with all-male musicians playing diatonic melodies on a homemade

Malay violin (*biola*) of European origin and a score of frame-drums (*gandang*) could have become accepted into the standard song-dance repertoire in such a relatively isolated outpost of the former Netherlands East Indies as Haloban. We knew from the 19th century colonial-era literature that Dutch and other European ships used to visit Haloban *en route* between Sumatra's west coast, Nias and Simeulue to obtain information about the area, language, culture and the produce of the people, and we also knew that the Islands were an unimportant source of minor trading activity. But the Haloban people, when we asked them about their ancestors' contact with former Dutch officials, replied that they had no evidence or memory of any. Yet, we thought, even if they had visited Haloban, that that would not explain why and how the people had adopted such a syncretic dance into Haloban's regular repertoire of dances.

We were given several possible explanations of the dance's origins. One story was told by the grandson of the last "pretender king" of Haloban as follows. After the Tuangku kingdom palace was built at Haloban around the year 1700 (he believes), the *langser* dance was performed at the *istana* for the installation of the ninth Datuk Besar in the presence of the Dutch *Kontroleur* who resided in Singkil, the capital of the Onderafdeeling Singkil (Singkil District) on mainland Sumatra. However, this story cannot be true because according to the *trombo* of the Tuangku palace, there were only six generations of Tuangku kings; moreover, there is no evidence to prove that the *Kontroleur* of Singkil ever visited Haloban.

Another origin story was told by the elders in 2010, who said that a Nias descendant working on a Dutch warship moored in Gunung Sitoli harbour on Nias' east coast once watched Dutch dancers on board performing the *langser* dance with popular band accompaniment, decided to copy its movements and formations, and later taught it to some Haloban friends who then taught it to some young unmarried couples to perform for their enjoyment and entertainment.

These Haloban elders readily accepted the dance, they continued. But they clearly did not regard it as comparable to their own sacred, elegant ceremonial dances. Nor did they allow adult men and women to dance together because, they said, women who should be respected as wives and mothers should not appear on stage in case they were seen to be showing off. As noted above, occasionally pre-puberty-age children were allowed to perform the dance in a serious atmosphere on special occasions, such as at Lebaran or Lebaran Haji, but normally only men were allowed to perform it, and their performances usually took on a humorous atmosphere, as in the performance we recorded in 2010.

Indeed, the *langser* performance that we saw in 2010 was performed with much mirth. Members of the audience kept bursting into laughter as they watched the antics of their fellow dancers performing the female role in the dance, especially in the maze-like movements as the dancers found their right place in the row of alternate “males” and “females” in the section where they joined hands and danced in a large circle, or in two large and small concentric circles. Some women in the audience found it particularly funny as they watched their menfolk impersonating the *melambai* female-style hand movements in their adaptation of a foreign-influenced dance.

It took me three more field trips to Haloban as well as to several west-coastal Sumatran towns - including Padang, Sibolga, Barus and Singkil, and the village of Saniang Baka in Solok, West Sumatra - before I could piece together the puzzle of *langser*'s likely arrival in Haloban, and explain the hybrid Malay-European character of the dance and accompanying music. I shall draw together the evidence in the penultimate chapter of this thesis.

The most convincing origin story that I heard in 2014 was from another Nias descendant named Bp Basama, who lived in Sibolga and claimed to be 117 years old, though he had all his wits about him. He said that a fisherman friend from Haloban had told him that he had seen a

komandir instructing *langser* couples dancing with great gusto on the top deck of a Dutch ship that was sailing from Sibolga to Nias in the early 1940s. He said that his fisherman friend was so impressed with the dance that he remembered its every detail and had demonstrated and taught it to his friends and relatives at home in Haloban, and that it continued to develop to this day.

This story, if true, could explain the *komandir*'s Malay and corrupt Dutch calls to the dancers. According to 117-year old Bp Basama, and to many of the dance's present-day performers in Haloban, their forebears so enjoyed dancing *langser* from the 1940s onwards that over the decades it became a standard dance which had to be performed at the end of a celebration in Haloban, and it remains very popular to this day.

I shall now describe the 2014 performance of the *langser* couples dance by some properly trained and talented boys and girls, who followed instructions to change to other formations no less than 64 times in their 32-minute performance. They performed with modest downward gazes and in a much more serious atmosphere than in the 2010 performance⁷².

⁷² In the 2010 performance, I recorded in 2010, the men were directed to perform only ten floor formations, while in the much more complete performance I recorded in 2014, the boys and girls performed a total of 64 floor formations according to my count.

7.3. A Mixed-Sex *Langser* Performance in Haloban in 2014

In June 2014, the Sitanggang family's Haloban-born *perantauan* relatives returned to visit their home village (*kampung halaman*) at Lebaran Haji. Having requested their relatives to provide entertainment during their visit and making a financial contribution for the purpose, the family decided to ask Haloban's leading *balangser*, Bp Ayub, to train a group of final-year primary school boys and girls to dance *langser* in couples. So, it happened that I was able to record a well-rehearsed, mixed sex performance of the dance in June 2014, with its *dendang sikambang* accompaniment on *biola* and *gandang* and its compulsory caller – the *komandir*, who called out loud instructions to the dancers throughout the performance like in Western square dancing. The *tukang biola*, Bp Ridwan Sitanggang, accompanied them during the performance (**Figure 7.6**).



Figure 7.6: *Tukang biola* Bp Ridwan Sitanggang accompanying the *langser* performance in Haloban in 2014

Before the performance, Bp Anhar Sitanggang told me again that until 2004, a group of Haloban men and women used to enjoy an annual outing by boat to Singkil where they went shopping for nice new clothes, including Western-style skirts and blouses for the girls and shirts and trousers for the boys, especially for the boys and girls who were earmarked to perform the dance. Spurred on by the thought of their relative's intended visit for Lebaran in 2014, members of Bp Anhar's family and friends went shopping for new clothes in Singkil in

the week before Lebaran. On their return to Haloban, the boys and girls who were learning to become *balangser* (*langser* dancers) under the expert guidance of Bp Anhar Sitanggang had their mothers fit them with their new clothes, ready to perform.

By then their daily dance practices had turned them into confident *belangser* dancers who knew what the basic commands by the dance caller (one of their teachers) meant. They knew that the call (i) *langser dames!* meant the boys should stand in a row facing the girls in a parallel row, that (ii) *suker* meant that the boys and girls in the two parallel rows should step toward each other and meet in the central part of the arena, that (iii) *tuber* meant they must form couples and dance *joget* steps together while rotating around the dance arena (as in a waltz), that (iv) *dah di dames* meant each couple must sway together to the right and the left for a few minutes, and that (v) *lastrei sesoplat* meant that each dancer should leave his/her partner and return across the floor to join his/her original parallel row again.

On the third day after Lebaran, as was the established practice, Bp Anhar's family and the members of three other families who had agreed to cooperate (*bergotong royong*) to present the performance and the day's feasting, took part in the compulsory procession around the village, beginning after Azhar prayers around 2pm⁷³ (**Figure 7.7**). *Silat* dancers and women singing *dikie* songs progressed at the front, followed by the boys and girls who were to perform *langser* (**Figure 7.8**) the *komandir* (commandant, caller), and an announcer with a loudspeaker who urged all the villagers to come and enjoy the performance later that day.

⁷³ The procession around the village may be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6mI518nDNk> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzZ7pV3fxXM>, while the *langser* performance that followed at 4.30-6pm that day may be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41tidqhiYpg> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiK-JWBVN4w>



Figure 7.7: The *komandir* with a loudspeaker makes announcements at the back of the procession around Haloban before the *langser* performance in 2014. The women in front are singing *dikie* songs of praise.



Figure 7.8: The *balangser* dancers wear their new *langser* costumes and arrive at the performance arena

The musicians at the back played a repetitive rhythm in quadruple metre on their *gandang* frame drums:

//: ba . ba . ba . . dum ://

where the onomatopoeic symbol *dum* denotes a damped, high-pitched sound (with a quaver value) beaten with the player's right hand fingers near the edge of the drum skin (**see Figure 7.9**) and the onomatopoeic symbol *ba* denotes an undamped, resonant, low-pitched sound (with a crotchet value) beaten with the player's right hand a few centimetres in from the edge.



Figure 7.9: A *gandang* player beating a sharp, high-pitched *ba* sound with the fingers of his right hand while damping the sound with three fingers of his left hand

The performance began around 4:30pm in the yard in front of the host's house, surrounded by a large audience of excited adults and children listening to the men playing a *biola* and a score of *gandang* (**Figures 7.10** and **7.11**).



Figure 7.10: The *biola* player plays, holding his instrument on his knee and on his mid-shoulder bone. Another *biola* player sits on a chair as he plays, flanked on each side by *gandang* players.



Figure 7.11: Children in the audience watch the dance preparations and performance

The *belangser* gathered in the arena, and, on the arrival of the *komandir* with his microphone, the dancers listened for his first announcement, which meant they were due to start the dance.



Figure 7.12: The boys form a row as the musicians start to accompany the *langser* dance. The girls form a row facing the row of boys as the musicians start to play

Eventually they heard him announce through the microphone: “*langser dames!*” The *balangser* divided into two groups of eight boys and eight girls, and stood in two parallel rows facing each other, with the boys on the left and the girls on the right (from the front spectators’ view) (see **Figure 7.12**).

This was the first *langser* dance formation. The caller stood at one end and watched them stand still or mark time as they listened to the musicians playing *Dendang Pulau Pinang* (“Penang Island Song”). The caller kept moving from the front to the back of the arena in case anyone needed his help (see **Figure 7.13**).

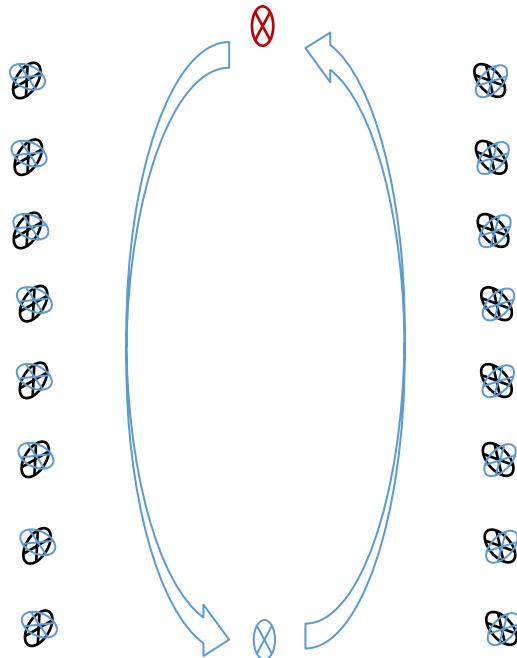


Figure 7.13: The First *Langser* Dance Formation. After the *komandir* calls out “*langser dames*”, eight male dancers stand in the row on the left and face eight female dancers in the parallel row on the right, with the *komandir* standing in between them at one end, ready to move to the other end to direct any dancers who need attention

The *komandir* then called out: “*end suker dames!*”, whereupon the boy and girl at the front of the parallel rows stepped forward toward each other, followed by the second pair, and so on, until all eight couples were standing together in the central part of the arena.



Figure 7.14: The couples join hands and dance *joget* steps while rotating and moving around the arena.

Then the dancers heard the caller announce: “*end kufelen tuber*”, which they understood to mean they should form couples and dance *joget* steps together as they rotated in couples around the arena (see **Figure 7.14**).



Figure 7.15: The boys stand in a row opposite the row of girls as each couple enters the space between the rows and dances *joget*, rotating in clockwise direction.

The caller then *said*: “*dah di dames*,” and the couples knew to continuously sway to the right and to the left.

When he called out “*end kufelen tuber*”, each couple responded by rotating around the floor again, then when he called out “*lastrei sesoplat*”, each dancer left his/her partner and crossed the floor to resume his/her place in the original parallel rows (see **Figure 8.16**).

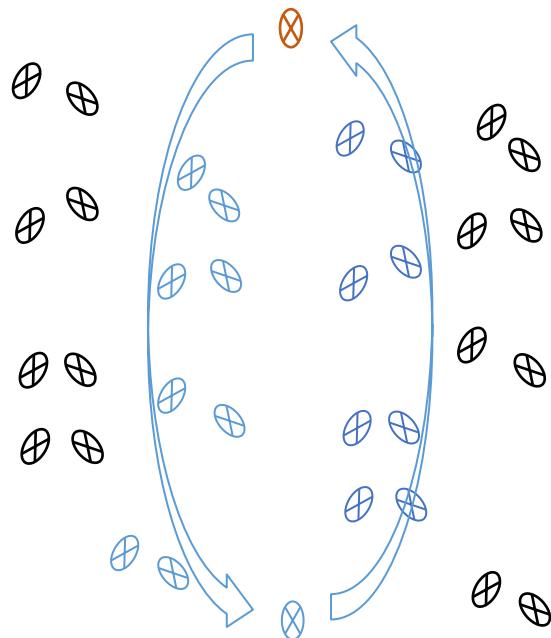


Figure 7.16: The Second and Third *Langser* Dance Formations. After the *komandir* calls out “*end suker dames*”, each couple steps toward his/her partner. The diagram shows the couples meeting mid-floor and responding to the “*end kufelen tuber*” command to dance *joget* steps in couples, then when the *komandir* calls out “*lastrei sesoplat*”, each dancer leaves his/her partner and crosses the floor to resume his/her place in the appropriate parallel row.



Figure 7.17: The *komandir*/dance caller holds a microphone and directs the dancers to change from one section of the *langser* dance to the next.

Then the *komandir* called out *refdrum!* (a corruption of the Dutch/German expression: *rechts rum*, meaning “rotate to the right”), and the dancers knew to lift their hands and arms up and then to hold their partner’s hand and sway their arms together. The *komandir* called out *koa* (meaning “form a large circle”), and then *refdrum* again. After forming a big circle, the dancers raised their hands and then held hands, rotating anticlockwise to the right for some time (see **Figure 7.18**).



Figure 7.18: The dance couples join hands and form a large circle, then all step forward to form a narrower circle, and continue to move in and out in this way several times.

When the *komandir* called out *eng-eng koa* (*eng* in Dutch means “narrow”) the dancers moved inwards to form a narrow circle, then outwards again in large circle, and when he called out “*Alfo*” (lit. “repeat”), they moved in and out several times (see **Figure 7.19**).

Finally, after the *komandir* calls out *lastrei dahmisen*, the dancers stop holding hands, and as the tempo of the music hastens, they join their partner again and dance in couples. On the *komandir*’s final command - *langser dames*, all the dancers return to their two original parallel rows, and after a final musical flourish, the musicians end the final phrase of their piece.

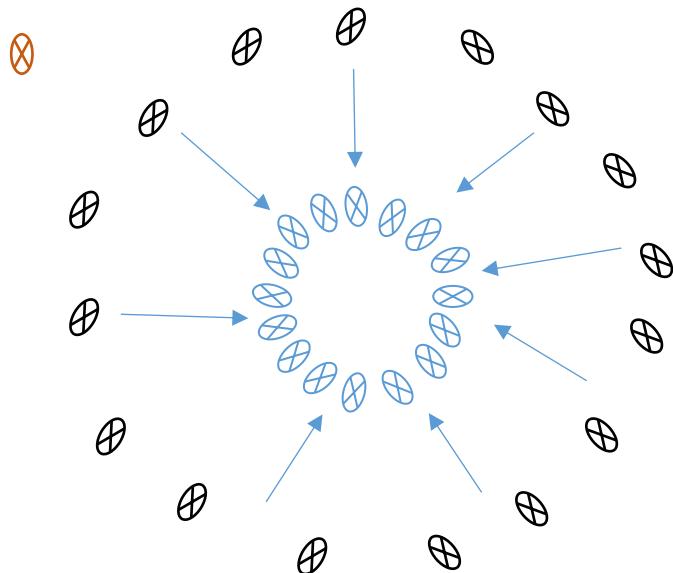


Figure 7.19: After the *komandir* calls out *koal* (“form a circle”), the dancers form a circle, then when he calls out *refdrum*, the dancers hold hands and rotate to the right for some time. The *komandir* calls out *eng-eng koal* again, the dancers move inwards to form a small circle, then outwards again, and when he calls out *alfo* (“repeat”) they move inwards then outwards several times.

7.4. The Langser-Related Balanse Madam Dance Performed by Christian Villagers of Nias Descent in Padang

While studying the *langser* dance, I learned that a dance of alleged Malay-Portuguese origins with a slightly similar name to *langser madam* –i.e., *balanse madam* - was regularly performed at weddings and baby thanksgivings in a pair of Christian villages of Nias descendants called Seberang Palinggam and Kuta Padang (or Kampung Nias) in the South Padang District of the present-day city of Padang, and that the elders had recognised it as their main heritage dance and cultural identity symbol. So, I went to investigate.

I had read about the dance in a BA thesis by Erwanto submitted at STSI Padang Panjang in 1998 titled “An Analysis of the *Balanse Madam* Dance Form”, and in a thesis by Sulastri, also submitted at STSI Padang Panjang in 1998, titled “The Existence of the *Balanse Madam* Dance in the Community that Promotes it”. The two authors wrote that the *balanse madam* performances are directed by a *komandir* who calls out instructions to its four dancers/two couples as they perform *joget* movements accompanied by pieces played on an *orkes gamad* comprising a *biola*, guitar, drum kit, *gendang Melayu*, tambourine and cymbals⁷⁴. In 2009, a journalist named Indrayuda wrote a blog based on Erwanto’s thesis titled “The Functions of the *Balanse Madam* Dance in the Social Life of Nias Society in Padang City”, in which he quoted Erwanto (1998: 22) and argued that before the Portuguese arrived in Padang in 1669 (*sic*), they had sailed along the coast of Aceh and North Sumatra and stopped at the royal ports of Tiku, Pariaman, and Padang, when people from Nias were working as labourers for the Chinese and as labourers and household servants for the Portuguese, and that the Nias *perantauan* may have seen Portuguese folk dances like *balanse madam* performed at their weddings etc.

⁷⁴ An *orkes gamad* is a Minangkabau name for a syncretic, popular Malay-European-style string and percussion ensemble that somewhat resembles an Indonesian *kroncong* ensemble.

Another source was the photograph dated 1948 showing the *balanse madam* dance performed by boys and girls of Nias descent in Oedjoeng Karang village near Padang in 1946. It shows boys in white shirts and trousers and girls in Western-style skirts stepping forward bare foot and touching their partner's raised hands as they rotate in a clockwise circular formation.



Figure 7.20: The *balanse madam* dance performed by boys and girls of Nias descent in Oedjoeng Karang village near Padang in 1946.⁷⁵

7.4.1. Description of a 2012 *Balanse Madam* Performance in Kuta Padang⁷⁶

The *balanse madam* dance is a modern choreographed version of the Kuta Padang village's traditional motto dance. Like *langser*, its movements, formations and music somewhat resemble that of popular French and other 18th and 19th century European *lanser dances*, which are part of the *kwadril* (Kuta Padang- Malay spelling) or *quadrille* (French spelling)

⁷⁵ This photo by an anonymous photographer was published in the *Singgalang* newspaper in Padang on 26 January, 2014, and reproduced at: <http://niadilova.blogdetik.com/2014/01/27/minang-saisuak-160-tari-balanse-madam-1948>

⁷⁶ Video titled *Resepsi Pernikahan Dina, Putri Bpk. Edison*, published by Bob Branto in November 2012, published on You-tube on February 17, 2014 (downloaded October 20, 2016).

square dance tradition which was popularly performed in Europe and in many of the French and Dutch colonies in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries.

For a *balanse madam* performance, eight young men and eight young women dress in Niasan-influenced Malay-style costumes, the men in *teluk belanga* trouser-suits with *kain songket* and *peci*, and the women wearing their hair in a traditional bun (see photo 8.5 above) or – today- a special headdress, a *kebaya panjang* (long blouse) with a European skirt, antique jewellery, and an open fan in their right hand. They dance together in couples, sometimes touching their partner's raised hands, at other times without touching each other but maintaining eye contact (as in the European *quadrille* and *lanser-* style dancing), and sometimes linking arms and dancing in couples while circling in clockwise then anticlockwise directions. Sometimes the female partner kneels down on one knee while her partner dances in a circle around her in clockwise then anticlockwise fashion, and at other times each couple hops forward as in the Melakan *branyo* dance, which is a Malay-Portuguese *kacukan*/hybrid dance influenced by Portuguese colonial era *branyo* dancing (see Sarkissian, 2008). Hopping is a characteristic facet of Portuguese folk dance and its derivatives in Southeast Asian *joget*-style dancing.

Members of the instrumental ensemble comprise a *biola* player, a Western *dram kit*, and Malay frame-drums. The *biola* and percussion play the typically Malay-style, diatonically tuned *lagu dua*⁷⁷ melody, in a major key at fast tempo. The melody comprises two-sections as usual in *lagu dua* music. Unlike in the first video described above, the fast tempo of the music and dancing remains constant throughout. Unlike in the next video, it does not accelerate near the end (see DVD excerpt 7.1 and 7.2).

In this modern choreographed version of Kuta Padang village's traditional *balanse madam* dance, four young men and four young women form couples and perform very similar

⁷⁷ In Malay music-culture, *lagu dua*, meaning “two-step,” is a lively song-dance that usually follows a slow, introspective *senandung* song in a process called “song coupling”).

movements and formations to the *balanse madam* dance performance shown in video 1. They are dressed in Niasan-influenced Malay-style costumes, the men in *teluk belanga* with *kain songket* and *peci*, and the women with a special headdress and *kebaya panjang* with antique jewelry, holding an open fan in their right hand. The fast tempo of the music and dancing remains constant throughout.

Members of the instrumental ensemble comprise an akordeon player, dram kit and frame-drums. With the percussion section the accordionist plays the Malay-style two-section, diatonically tuned Malay *lagu dua* melody in a major key at fast tempo, and it becomes faster at the end. Sometimes the drumming provides the only musical accompaniment without a melodic part.

In his thesis on *balanse madam*, Erwanto included his full-score transcription of *balanse madam* music (copied below) played on a West Sumatran *orkes gamat*⁷⁸ which consisted of a *biola*, *gitar* (guitar), *giring-giring* (cymbals), snare drum and bass drum. Its diatonically tuned *biola* melody built on a G major scale with a varyingly-pitched tone 3/B comprises two repeated phrases of two bars each, which I have called “a” and “b,” and a variant of “a”, called “a/1,” in the following quadruple-metric, five-phrase structure: //: a a b b a/1 ://. It is accompanied by largely syncopated *gitar* chords based on the central tone 1/G with varying top notes, a busy cup cymbals part (four semiquavers to every beat), and varied rhythmic motifs on the mainly down-beat snare drum and mainly upbeat bass drums. Its phrase “a” features a steep 8-tone descent and rise of a fourth followed by a convexly curving phrase “b” and a steeply descending phrase a/1.

⁷⁸ An *orkes gamat* is a traditional Minangkabau ensemble comprising traditional Minangkabau and Western pop band instruments such as a drum kit.

Transcription 7.2: Music accompanying a *balanse madam* performance in Seberang Palinggam, South Padang District, Padang (date unknown, recording not available). Transcribed by Erwanto in his thesis, submitted at STSI Padang Panjang in 1998

B = Do

7.5. Culture Contact and Transculturation Processes in the Development of the *Langser/Langser Madam* and *Balanse Madam* Dances

Both Erwanto and Sulastri assumed that the *balanse madam* dance and its music are a syncretic combination of Portuguese, Malay, Minangkabau and Nias stylistic facets, though they did not present examples of the alleged facets. When I read that they and the journalist Indrayuda all thought that *balanse madam* had been developed in the Seberang Palinggam district by former labourers and household servants of Nias descent during the Portuguese empire (1511-1641) and that *balanse madam* is venerated and preserved as the people's Malay-Portuguese-Nias/Minangkabau ancestral heritage to this day, I realised that not only its artistic form and style but also its history of culture contact resemble that of *langser*, but that the Islander genre's history of culture contact is in fact more complex still.

For like the case of *balanse madam*, the syncretism of the Islanders' *langser/langser madam* music and dance is clearly the result of multiple culture contact over the centuries involving Jamu Pesisir and Jamu-Pulo cultures. The Islanders' *langser* music and dance style involves not only the mixing of elements of Portuguese culture (including the implied harmony-based melodies of Portuguese folk songs with melancholy lyrics called *fado*) and facets of Jamu Pulo Malay culture (such as the Jamu-Pulo melodic formula-based melodies and *joget* couples dancing), but also elements of Niasan culture (including some of the lyrics that are partly in the Niasan language), and the Melayu Jamu Pesisir culture practiced along Sumatra's west coast between Singkil and Sibolga (such as their ornamented *dendang* singing style).

Thus, neither the *balanse madam* nor the *langser* dance involve the adoption of only a small number of foreign traits⁷⁹. On the contrary, both are stylistically quite different from the Portuguese, Malay and other prototypes that influenced their development. Their hybrid styles

⁷⁹ Culture contact theory often tends to emphasise Western rather than non-Western cultural examples of hybridity, as in the case say of a composer wanting to get a bit of exotic sound colour into a piece by adding just a few discrete traits from another culture.

both represent a cultural transformation resulting from lengthy contact between at least two cultures, i.e. a transformative process that ethnomusicologists call “transculturation”.

Transculturation occurs only when a group of people select for adoption whole new organising and conceptual or ideological principles – musical and extramusical – as opposed to small, discrete alien traits. The motivation to adopt the new, broad music principles of equal temperament and harmony in *langser* music may have been the halo of dominant culture prestige in the Portuguese colonial situation, or material or political advantage (Kartomi 1981: 244).

7.6. A Hypothesis: The Probable European Facets of the *Langser* Dance and its Name

As intimated above, the *langser* or *langser madam* dance of Haloban seems to combine Malay *joget* dance movements with the French *lancer* dance, which is a variant of the French *quadrille* square directed by a dance caller (*komandir*), as in European and American square dancing. *Lancer* was a fashionable dance in France, Holland, England and other parts of Europe and its colonies including Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its four mixed couples moving in square or rectangular dance formations took turns to perform the dance from their corner of the square, though sometimes three took turns while the other couple rested. In former colonial centres such as Kuta Padang, Haloban, the Cocos Islands, the French Lesser Antilles that adopted and adapted versions of the dance, various names were used⁸⁰. Thus, in the Cocos Islands and in Kuta Padang, for example, “quadrille” became *kwodril* (pers. comm., Jenny McCallum, October 2016) and in Haloban it became *kwodri* (see Anhar’s transcription of the *komandir*’s calls at the end of this chapter).

Naturally the specifics of the *lancer* and *quadrille* dances in the former colonial centres were varied; thus, in the version of the dance that we recorded in Haloban, the typically European

⁸⁰ A derivative of the *quadrille* found in the French Lesser Antilles is known as *kwadril*, and the dance is also still found in Madagascar and old Jamaican/Caribbean culture (Clark and Clement, 1981).

set of four quadrille couples became eight couples (see **Figure 7.1**), and the accompanying music was played on the local Jamu Pulo *biola* and *gandang* ensemble.

The *quadrille*, which historically comprised a chain of four to six courtly versions of English country dances called *contradances*, probably derived from the Italian *quadriglia* (diminutive of *quadra*, hence a small square). The word *quadrille* originated in 17th-century military parades in which four mounted horsemen “danced” in square formations (Clark and Crisp, 1981: 97). As a parallel to these examples, I can mention a specific local example of the hybrid Malay-Portuguese *joget* dance that was introduced by upper-class Eurasians claiming Portuguese descent in the 1950s in Malaka on the west coast of the Malay peninsula (Sarkissian, 1996: 39).



“Accidents in Quadrille Dancing”, 1817 caricature, in Clark, Mary and Clement Crisp, 1981. *The history of dance*. New York: Crown, p.97

However, *langser* in Indonesian means “to move back and forth”, and some local people think this may be the origin of the name.

7.7. Conclusion

Langser is a dance and musical style with a clearly hybrid, *kacukan* character in that it combines facets of the Urang Pulo Malay culture with elements of eighteenth and nineteenth century European *quadrille/kwodril* dances and music, and their *lancer* offshoot. Its *kacukan*

character is attributable to the long, transformative processes of transculturation that followed insular Southeast Asians' earliest prolonged period of contact with a European music-culture – that of the Portuguese, who ran their empire from such centres as Melaka and visited such areas as west-coastal Sumatra during their colonial sojourn in Southeast Asia (1511-1641).

Among the results of this early contact was the development of Indonesia's syncretic *kroncong* ensembles, Haloban's *biola-gandang* ensembles, the *sikambang kapri* ensembles on Sumatra's west coast, West Sumatra's (including Padang's Nias descendants') *orkes gamat*, and other Southeast Asian string and percussion bands with their characteristically motivic, interlocking musical styles, diatonic tunings, melodies with harmonic implications, and hybrid dance steps and formations. Moreover, these ensembles accompany sentimental Malay vocal repertoires that resemble Portugal's *fado* folk songs with melancholy melodies and lyrics and are associated with the widespread couples dancing such as *joget*, *ronggeng*, *langser* and *balanse madam* dances that resemble Portugal's *branyo* folk dances in some respects, as various ethnomusicologists have pointed out.

Thus, *langser* contrasts starkly with the Urang Pulo's other more intimate items of music and dance that belong to their ancestral heritage, indeed that show no clear foreign influences whatever. They include the *adok* dance, lullabies, unaccompanied *dendang sikambang* music, and the *gandang* rhythms that accompany the martial arts and processions. Like the rest of the Urang Pulo repertoire, however, *langser* performances serve to promote social interaction and integration, for they can be presented at traditional weddings and circumcisions, though normally only as an entertaining final dance at the end of an evening of male couples dancing and *dendang sikambang* music, or by unmarried couples at a Lebaran or other celebration.

Together the Malay and the syncretic Malay-European components of the Urang Pulo music-culture and the tinges of influences from emigres hailing from nearby west-coastal Sumatra, Simeulu and Nias demonstrate Kepulauan Banyak's distinctive cultural identity.

Addendum

A Transcription and Glossary of the Langser Komandir's Instructions in A Patois of Jamu-Pulo Malay and Currunt Dutch

1. Instructions called out by the *Komandir* in a *Langser* performance in Haloban, June 2016

Transcribed by Bp Anhar Sitanggang,

<i>Wib wib mar</i>	
<i>Dameson</i>	
<i>Oplas kore giro giram inku inkua kumpul lima</i>	
<i>Lepasture</i>	
<i>Oplas</i>	
<i>Balangser madam</i>	
<i>Balangser Agus</i>	
<i>Inggirland</i>	
<i>Nurdiman</i>	
<i>Vikalovani farti alfikat</i>	
<i>Bulne</i>	
<i>Rumdikate</i>	
<i>Balangser qodri</i>	
<i>Rekturne</i>	
<i>Vikalovani farti alfikat</i>	
<i>Kembali</i>	
<i>Vingka diso</i>	
<i>Ahungkar ingkisa diso</i>	
<i>Vingka disa</i>	
<i>Kembali</i>	
<i>Ra rum</i>	

Note: My interlocutors say they understand only a few of the above "Dutch" words and phrases but know what the instructions mean. The "Dutch" words include: *balangser dames!* *rumdikate!* *ra rum!* *refdrum!* and *rekturne!* The Malay words include *kumpul lima*, *kembali*, and *balangser*. Presumably the word *Inggirland* is a combination of the Indonesian *Inggeris*, meaning English, and the land of England.

2. List of *Langser* Instructions

alfo! - repeat! (e.g. form a large circle then a narrow circle again with repeats)
ambu dikate! - mark time as you swing your arms back and forth! (as in Figure 7.3)

balangser dames! - perform the *langser dames!* – e.g. form a male row and a parallel female row
dah di dames! - swing your female partner back and forth!
damesen: ladies, females, partners
end kafelen tuber! - form couples and rotate around the arena together! (as in a waltz)
end suker dames! –step forward toward and meet your female partner!
eng-eng koa! - form a narrow circle! (by stepping inwards from a larger circle)
kembali! - return to where you were!
koa! – all dancers go and form a circle!
lastrei sesoplat! - release your partner’s hands and cross the floor to join your original row!
rumdikate! - rotate!
ra rum! - rotate on the spot!
refdrum! - turn around to the right!
rekturne! rotate to the right!
suker - step forward toward your partner and join her!
tuber! - hold your partner and *berjoget* (dance) around the arena!

My study of *langser madam* music and dance in Haloban compared to *balanse madam* music and dance in Padang has resulted in a novel contribution to ethnomusicological culture contact theory (Kartomi 1981, Kartomi and Blum, 1994) which could be called “double transculturation”. As Kartomi wrote about contact between two or more cultures in prolonged contact:

The effects of contact range from i) the making of minor adjustments within existing musical styles, such as the small-scale transfer of discrete musical traits from one music into another, to the ii) creative transformation of whole styles and of the ideological and music-organising principles on which they are based. Creative transformation, which may be termed syncretism, synthesis, or transculturation, normally occurs as a result of the convergence between cultures over a prolonged period of contact. Such convergence may result in an influx of new musical ideas, organizing principles and repertoires. They may result in a greater level of individual or corporate creativity than before... Thus it is that whole styles, repertoires, genres, pedagogical methods, extra-musical meanings commonly attached to music, the manner of theorizing about music, and even the way a group dresses or behaves at musical events may change as a result of convergence in contact situations (Kartomi and Blum 1994, ix).

I contend that *langser* and other vocal-*biola-gandang* music and associated couples dancing in Haloban and west-coast Sumatra are one example of a transculturation process resulting from prolonged contact between the Portuguese, who operated in the islands from Melaka in 1511-

1641, and coastal Malay societies such as in Padang and Sibolga, and later Dutch culture as expressed in the corrupt Dutch texts of the caller's instructions. Thus, the process was one of "double transculturation". The same may be said in the case of the *balanse madam* genre in Padang. Thus, both *langser madam* and *balanse madam* are "creative transformations" of Malay, Portuguese and Dutch genres, and the ideological and music-organising principles on which they are based exemplify the extreme end of Kartomi's continuum. In each case the music-organising principles are (i) the Portuguese implied harmonic melodies on the *biola*, (ii) the non-harmonic Malay vocal melody, (iii) the Malay cyclic drumming, and (iv) the Dutch caller's texts; and when they were combined they were eventually transformed either into the new *langser madam* or the new *balanse madam* style. The difference between Haloban and Padang genres is the ideological taboo on women appearing on stage in Haloban and therefore the all-male couples dancing versus the ideologically acceptable mixed dancing in Padang. Thus, the two examples of creative transformation of whole styles and of the ideological and music-organising principles on which they were based can be explained on the basis of this extension of culture contact theory which I have called "double transculturation".

CHAPTER EIGHT

VOCAL STYLES OF THE BARDIC *TALIBUN* PERFORMANCES AND MALE AND FEMALE *DIKIE* COMPARED

This chapter discusses two unrelated vocal genres that may be performed at a host's request at *baralek* celebrations in Kepulauan Banyak. The first is the *talibun* story-intoning genre, in which a bard (who is often a shaman) intones long legends or other stories and offers advice to clients who request that he utter spells or sing lyrics that refer to the ancestral and nature spirits to help them attain a wish. The second is the Muslim *dikie* (M.) or *zikir* (Ar) genre that is not a native Islander tradition but comprises devotional singing of Muslim texts in Arabic by groups of men, or the "reading" of *dikie* texts from books in Arabic by female choruses who perform at the request of hosts at *baralek* celebrations. The aim of the chapter is to compare the traditional style of *talibun* performances and functions with the adapted style and functions of the devotional exercises and performances called *dikie* (M), or *zikir* (Ar.).

8.1. Style and Function of the Bardic *Talibun* Tradition: for Entertainment and Magic

A *talibun* is a long poetic story or legend that is intoned in the Haloban or the Jamu Pulo speech variety, or a combination of both. It is usually performed by an expert story-teller or bard called a *pendendang talibun* (Ma. Pulo) in the *talibun* poetic form (discussed below) in relatively free metre and free rhythm, either unaccompanied or with *gandang* accompaniment. It is likely that there were both female and male bards in the past, as in a few reported cases in coastal Sumatra (pers. comm., Margaret Kartomi, Haloban, 2010), but the social milieu in the Islands which keeps women in the home mitigates severely against such a possibility in the present day.

A bard must have an excellent singing voice, a good knowledge of the local repertoire of melodies, an ability to sing in the appropriate musical style, a good memory for the large local

repertoire of orally transmitted legends and other stories, and a ready ability to improvise new stories, allusions and jokes for the entertainment of his audiences. *Talibun* stories are also told along the entire west coast of Sumatra, where they are known as *talibun pasisir* (west-coastal Sumatran *talibun*) and are intoned in the various Malay speech varieties found along the coast (Kartomi 2012: 223)⁸¹.

However, *talibun* performances are now rare compared to the 1970s when Kartomi found a vibrant tradition still practiced along Sumatra's west coast, though even then it was beginning to decline. Because *pendendang talibun* (*talibun* bards) are now few and far between, I can discuss only one example of a performance in this chapter, which only touches on the *talibun* story-intoning tradition practiced in the Islands. The musical transcription of a verse in *talibun* form below is presented in order to delineate the *talibun* singing style and poetry from the *dendang sikambang* style discussed in the last chapter. It has enabled briefly to analyse it for comparison with the much more melismatic *pendendang sikambang* style in the Islands.

8.1.1. The *Talibun* Bards

In the past, *talibun* bards often doubled as shamans who could perform feats of “black magic” (M. *ilmu sihir*,) and “white magic” (M. *ilmu putih*) by calling on the evil and benign spirits (M. *roh kasar* and *roh halus*) respectively to fulfil a request by a client. The term “black magic” denotes the likely infliction of serious harm on a victim as a result of a shaman’s actions and is therefore generally spoken of with disapproval, while “white magic” is approved of even by Muslims who compare spirits with the *jin* (spirits) mentioned in the Qur'an (pers. comm, Bp. Armansyah, master-teacher and performer of the Malay Pulo *talibun* tradition in Teluk Nibung, Pulau Ujung Batu, 17 June, 2010).

⁸¹ On Sumatra's northwest coast, *talibun* verses are also known as *ende-ende Tapanuli* (“Tapanuli verses”), and they are usually in a mix of Malay and Tapanuli/Batak languages.

Until about three decades ago when there was considerable demand for bards' performances and/or shamanic services at weddings, circumcision ceremonies, and baby thanksgivings, these men were itinerant artists who lived from the proceeds of their activities, often traveling by sampan along a river or across the sea to work in villages on different islands. A host would commission a bard or a pair of bards or more to perform stories all night for the entertainment of the person or persons being honoured and the audience of family and guests at a wedding, circumcision or other celebration.

When a *pendendang talibun* is employed today to perform at a wedding or circumcision ceremony, the host may ask him to intone new or old established stories all night from 9pm to the wee hours. If the occasion is a wedding, say, the bard may intone a story about love, or insert in his performance verses of advice (*naseb*, lit “advice”) to the couple about their expectations and behaviour after the wedding (pers comm. Bp Muhammad Edwar, Teluk Nibung, 17 june, 2010) if the occasion is a circumcision, the bard may intone a story about an adventure of a young man that contains advice to the boy to be kind to his parents

Until the 1960s, two or three itinerant *talibun* bards often travelled around the district seeking opportunities to perform and other work, taking turns to perform all night for several nights in a row. In return for each performance the bards would be given plenty of food and drink, and sometimes extra gifts of rice or cakes.

Mostly the bards tell sad stories that may move the audience to tears. For example, they may tell of the sad experiences of a *perantau* who leaves his village to win his fortune, has a difficult time abroad, and cannot return to his *kampong haloman* (home village). This may remind some parents in the audience of the loss of their own children, or spouses of the loss of their husband or brother, who were unable to return home for the same reason (pers. comm. from Bp. Armansyah, Teluk Nibung, 17 June, 2010.)

8.1.2. Pitunang and Salimbauak

In former times, a bard-shaman reputedly use his *ilmu Nabi Dawud* (“mystical knowledge from the prophet David”) to intone a mystical mantra called a *pitunang* in response to a request from a client. For example, he may be asked to make a person fall in love with his client, or that his enemy be made to feel sad or depressed, or even be poisoned. However, it is claimed that such examples of *ilmu sihir* (black magic) no longer occur in the Islands (pers. comm., Bp. Armansyah, 17 June, 2010. A bard may also use a kind of knowledge called *salimbauak* which empowers him to know, after he hears two allusory lines of a verse, what the next two lines must be.

8.1.3. Poetic Form and Content

Talibun is a verse form that may contain six, eight, ten or twelve lines of a varying number of syllables, including lines containing an *isi* (*i.e.* the verse’s main content, intent or message) and lines containing a *sampiran* (*i.e.*, an analogy with an indirect meaning, Kartomi, 2012; 223, 431).

For example, the following 6-line *talibun* verse describes a young man from Padang Tarap village who goes into a flower garden, which indirectly alludes to his search for a young woman. The next couplet mentions that he goes to the market after sunset to buy some betel leaves, which is an apparent irrelevancy. However, in the next line the listener is told that although the leaves are all the same, the feeling is different. By now the listener will have realised the poet’s intended analogy with the pair - that although they are similar in some respects, that their feelings for each other are different, *i.e.* the young man is sadly and hopelessly in love.

The 6-line verse in *talibun* form and Transcription 9.1 of a musical performance of it are as follows:

*Anak orang di Padang Tarap
pergi berjalan ke kebun bunga
hendak ke pekan hari t'lah senja
Di sana sirih kami kerekap
meskipun daunnya serupa
namun rasanya berlain jua*

*A young man in Padang Tarap
goes into the flower garden
wants to go to the market after sunset
To get our regular supply of betel nut leaves
the leaves there are the same
no matter, the feeling is different*

In some other areas along Sumatra's west coast, verses may have between 6 and 20 lines each.

On commissioned ceremonial occasions, bards often exchanged *talibun*-form verses with a guest, or a series of guests in some areas. The bard and a woman, say, would exchange verses about love, longing, marriage, and other themes, or they may offer advice to each other in answer to a question. However, the verse-exchange (*bersaut-saut*) performance practice is not normally allowed in Kepulauan Banyak today, mainly due to moral or religious reasons given why a woman should remain in the home and not appear in public (pers. comm., Bp. Armansyah, *ibid.*, 17 June, 2010).

8.1.4. Analysis of *Talibun* Performance Style

I shall now present a transcription and analysis of a performance of a *talibun* verse by the *pendendang talibun*, Bp Armansyah in Teluk Nibung in 2010. He sang with eyes closed while holding his frame drum (*gandang*) on his lap and resting his cheek on it for comfort and support. **Transcription 8.1** depicts the intoning of a lyric in *talibun* poetic form in a loudly carrying voice at a moderate tempo (MM ca. 60).

Figure 8.1 shows a *pendendang talibun* (Bp Armansyah) performing *talibun* verses from memory in Teluk Nibung while holding a frame drum (*gandang*) on his lap and resting his cheek on it for comfort and support as he concentrates on his art.



Transcription 8.1: a *Talibun* Verse performed in Teluk Nibung

Talibun

Transcribed by Sam McAuliffe
first 4 lines of a 6-line verse recorded by
M Kartomi in Teluk Nibung
transcribed excerpt from 00:14 - 00:46
MAMU/Sam McAuliffe/Transcriptions/Sam/Talibun (Teluk Nibung)

A male bard

hierarchy of tones

Free metre

An - ak or - ang di Pa - dang Ta - rap Per - gi -

ber - ja - lan ke ke - bun bu - nga hen -

dak ke pe - kan ha - ri sen - ja Di -

sa - na si - rih ka - mi ke - re - kap

Analysis:

Melodic direction change: $100 \times 28 / 69 = 40.56$

Tonal repetition: $100 \times 18 / 69 = 26$

Level shift: $100 \times (2-11) / 11 = -81.8$

As Transcription 7.1 shows, the intoners of *talibun* poetic lyrics normally adopt a relatively free rhythmic style and free metre, and irregularly place stresses on certain tones for emphasis in the story-telling process, as in the above. Normally the tempo is moderately slow and at a constant pace, though it can become faster if the bard thinks the story line needs it. The *talibun* singing style features much less melisma than in *dendang sikambang* performances, and it is often quite syllabic, especially when the bard is intoning a story as opposed to giving advice or expressing emotion in song. It contains a little incidental ornamentation (*bungaran*) - including turns, glides, glottal stops and vibrato-like ornaments, but again not as consistently as in *sikambang* singing. However, a bard can occasionally insert a regular metric melody for musical variety or to illustrate the emotion implied by the lyric of the moment in his story-telling. He may also vary the performance by singing an elaborately melismatic *dendang* at an appropriate thoughtful moment when he wants his audience to contemplate a happening or thought in the story.

In many respects, then, the bard's musical and poetic invention is determined by similar rules to those applied by a *pendendang sikambang* in say a lullaby. He often intones a series of very active melodic lines with a high degree of melodic direction change and small amount of tonal repetition. Alternatively, he may intone in a more chant-like way, with a high degree of tonal repetition and little melodic direction change. Also, as in *dendang sikambang* performance, a bard may intone around his choice of a large number of cadential formulae remembered from other performances he has heard, which often occur in retrograde form (such as the formula on tones 5321 and its retrograde 1235).

Thus, the performance transcribed above exhibits a moderate degree of melodic direction change (40.56%) and a small degree of adjacent tonal repetition (8.86%), and its main cadential formulae are tones 5431 (EDCA) and its retrograde 1345 (ACDE), with other melodic formulae (such as 2345 (BCDE) and 5432 (EDCB) occurring within lines. Its overall direction of

melodic movement is quite steeply descending, i.e. the level shift measures -63.6 (minus 63.6) degrees, and it is performed at a moderate tempo of MM *ca.* 60.

In conclusion, a *pendendang talibun* must have an excellent voice with copious carrying power, and be able to maintain a fluent vocal style for hours on end, although he normally needs in such a case to alternate with another *talibun* singer or singers who can take over as he rests. He must also possess a remarkable memory for hundreds of *talibun* verses containing 6, 8, 10, 12, or even up to 20 lines per verse (which are often in rhyme), an ability to create new *talibun* verses on the spot either with rhyme or not, a copious memory for local folk stories and legends, an ability to keep his audience enthralled for many hours, and in many cases shamanic skills and experience. His intoning style is generally much less melismatic than that of other *pendendang sikambang*, but he applies similar rules of composition to his performances, including improvising on cadential and other melodic formulae, and he sings verses in free metred and free rhythmic style. In Haloban the bards perform in Bahasa Haloban or a mix of Melayu Pulo and Haloban speech varieties, while on the west coast of the mainland Sumatra they mostly perform in coastal Malay/ Melayu Pasisir.

8.2 Male *Dikie* Devotional Intoning and Female *Dikie* Performing Functions and Style

Women and men perform their devotions and prayers separately. The main religious activities of men and boys worshipping in the mosques and Muslim schools in the Banyak Archipelago are the collective prayers and recitation of the Qur'an, and, after the prayers in the mosque are finished, the intoning of Sufi religious texts called *dikie*, or *zikir*. Like the *talibun*, this vocal genre differs considerably from *dendang sikambang* in its musical style, but it differs radically in style and function from *talibun*, which is not associated with Islam and is performed in totally different social contexts. This form of intoning the litany on Aceh's west coast and in the Islands was first developed in the 18th century by the Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*) in Aceh, especially on the west coast, when Aceh's capital - Kutaraja (now Banda Aceh) - was the centre

of the Malay world, and the practice spread to Kepulauan Banyak, where it is still popular today. Worshippers usually combine their intoning of Sufi-Muslim *dikie* verses with mental and physical exercises that help them “remember God” ((Amir 2006:21-22).

Sufi Islam played an important role over the centuries in developing Malay and Acehnese cultures. Traditionally there were three spheres of influence – (i) the Syafi’i *madzhab* (school of jurisprudence) which is strong in north and east coastal Aceh, (ii) the Shi’ite school which operated along Sumatra’s west coast in the 19th and 20th centuries but now exists in only a few small communities, and (iii) a syncretic form of Islam which combined Sufi-Islamic and pre-Islamic elements as are found in Kepulauan Banyak and some other areas. These three schools influenced the performing arts (Amir 2006:21-22). For example, areas influenced by syncretic Sufi worship developed the *dikie* and its *ratip* texts, while areas influenced by Shi’ism are home to performing arts that deal with death and tragedy, such as the *pho* and *malelang* song-dances in west-coastal Aceh (Kartomi 2012: 289, 298-300). The syncretic Sufi form of Islam was important in Kepulauan Banyak until recent decades, when the Syafi’i *madzhab* school became more influential (pers. comm., Bp Anhar Sitanggang, Haloban 2014).

Dikie, or *zikir*, is the Malay term for the Arabic *dhikr* (lit. 'remembrance'), the texts of which teach moral and religious values. *Dikie* is part of the Islamic practice of *tasawwuf* (mystical practice) that developed from the 7th century in the Perso-Arabic region. It aims to improve the worshipper’s knowledge of his inner self (*‘ilm al-batin*) as opposed to knowledge acquired through perception (*‘ilm al-zahir*). It developed as part of a syncretic form of Islam which combined Sufi Islamic and pre-Islamic elements found in societies such as Kepulauan Banyak’s.

Dikie includes the chanting or intoning of *witr* (Ar., lit. “chant”) or *ratib* (M., Sufi-Muslim texts), with the lead singer-worshipper called a *radat* (from the Arabic *raddad*, meaning “repeater”). It developed as a group activity that aimed to strengthen the brotherhoods’ internal bonds, and has therefore never been performed solo. Thus, the words chanted in the religious

exercises called *dikie* consist mainly of sacred verses such as praises of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad, either accompanied by frame drum playing or unaccompanied. If a verbal phrase happens not to fit a well-known melodic phrase, the vocalists can either adjust the text to fit it, or add filler syllables before or after the phrase (Amir 2006:190-197, 200-202).

I shall now present a transcribed excerpt of a *dikie* performance recorded in Haloban and discuss the tenets of its musical style, based on Transcription 2.2 below. The phonetically-transcribed text (in a local Acehnese-Jamee speech variety) begins (in translation) with a reference to “The rope of God,” derived from the Surat Ali ‘Imran (verse 103) of the Qur’an, which translates as “And hold firmly to the rope of God all together and do not become divided; it is a metaphor for unity among Muslims. The group then quotes the creed “There is no God but God”, and finally declares:” In God’s name (Bismillah), we offer this *rateb*”.

In several respects this excerpt of a heptatonic *dikie* melody is quite unlike traditional Islander *dendang sikambang* style. For one thing, the main tone on 1 (F#) very dominant throughout, and although the tonal range extends over an octave and a half, it has only one cadential formula – tones 4 3 2 1 (B A G F#), which occurs three times in this excerpt - once at the lower octave. Its male chorus sings mostly in fixed quadruple metre with little rhythmic and melodic-ornamental variability, and in near Western intonation. Its deep descent in the middle of the verse is unlike any traditional song studied here, making the analysis of its overall melodic direction/level shift a meaningless exercise except in that it draws further attention to its dissimilarities of style with the *sikambang* tradition. This, however, is not surprising because *dikie* melodies like this are deliberately modelled on local perceptions of Arabic models they have heard.

8.2.1. Female *Dikie* Performing Functions and Style

While men's *dikie* groups are mainly devotional in purpose, women's *dikie* groups have a highly social and performative function. The women sing a series of standard *kitab* (*dikie* texts) read from their books of printed *dikie* texts in Arabic (see **Figure 8.2.**) so that they are ready to perform whenever they are asked to do so

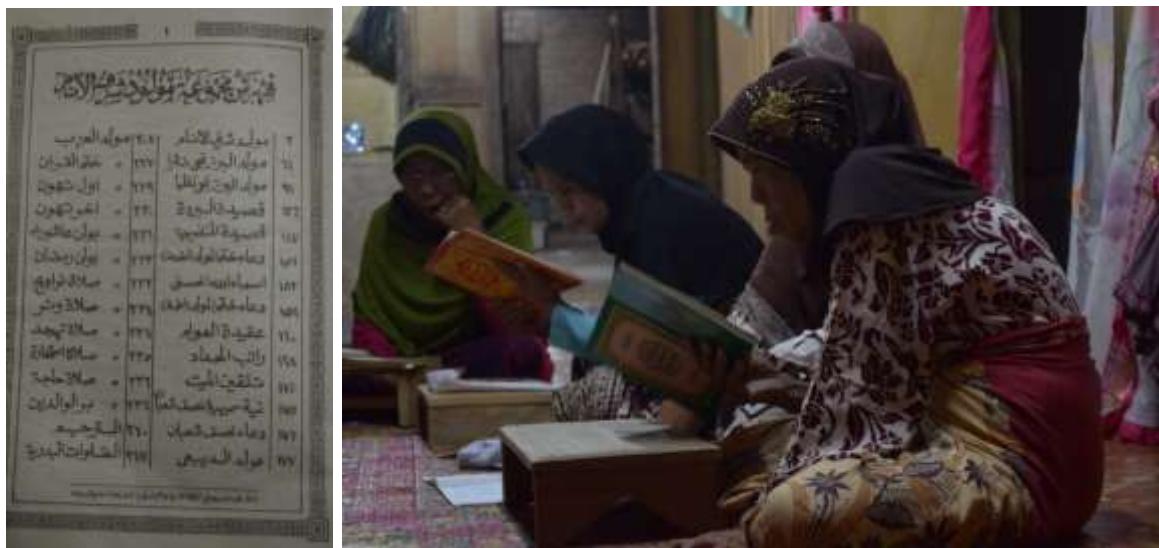


Figure 8.2: The index page of a book of *kitab* intoned by the women's *dikie* chorus group in Haloban

Figure 8.3: Women in a home intoning a *kitab* as they rehearse their *dikie* repertoire for performance at a *baralek*, Haloban, June 2007.

They practice singing together regularly each week in each other's homes (see **Figure 8.3**) and are sometimes asked by *baralek* hosts to sing a group of songs in the procession around the village and on the verandah of the host's home at the celebration in return for a small payment (see **Figure 8.4**). Government representatives also sometimes ask them to perform at Idulfitri and National Day celebrations. The female chorus in Haloban created their own motto song to a well-known *dikie* melody which they sang for the visiting Governor of Aceh when he visited them during the Green Turtle Festival in 2010.

Figure 8.5 shows the female villagers at a regular *dikie* in a hosted Baralek Adok of circumcission in Haloban, 3 April 2007.



Figure 8.4: A female chorus processes around Haloban singing *dikie* songs as a contribution to a circumcision *baralek*/celebration in Haloban, 3 April 2007.

Figure 8.5: A female chorus sing *dikie* songs inside the host's house at a celebration in Haloban, 3 April 2007.

8.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, both *talibun* and *dikie* singing styles and functions differ strongly from each other, as do the female and the male singing styles and functions. The *talibun* style and social function resembles that of the typical *dendang sikambang* genres in some respects, while the male and female *dikie* traditions are kept quite separate from both the *talibun* and the *dendang sikambang* traditions. However, all these genres serve particular social purposes and are regarded as important expressions of the artistic and ideological lives of the people living in the rural and urban communities of Kepulauan Banyak.

CHAPTER NINE

THE IDENTITY AND THE CONSERVATIONAL DILEMMA OF THE BANYAK ARCHIPELAGO AS PART OF SUMATRA'S MALAY WEST-COAST AND OFFSHORE ISLAND AREA

This chapter draws together the current discourse among the leading artists, elders, and other Islander men and women about their identity and issues associated with the sustainability of their music-culture, especially the vexed question of how best to revitalise its practices and pass on a deep knowledge of it to the next generation. Another issue being discussed is how best to spread the knowledge of the music-culture's unique character and close historical, cultural and - by intermarriage and migration - genetic relationship to Pagaruyung and the whole Malay west-coastal and offshore island communities of Sumatra. For it is thought that this may be part of the way of solving the Islanders' conservational dilemma.

9.1. The Most Distinctive Items of the Cultural Centre's – Haloban's – Artistic Identity

According to the Islands' leading artists and elders, Haloban is the cultural centre of the Banyak Archipelago, not only because it was the site of the former palace, but also because its artists can still perform the whole repertoire of music and dance at all-night wedding and circumcision celebrations, and it has two distinctive dances that symbolise its local identity and are performed nowhere else.

Their most important identity symbol is their unique, sacred *adok* dance, with the specially trained *penampik* (vocalist-cum-*gandang* player) intoning long poetic verses about the primal ancestors (Bundo Kanduang and Cindue Mato) of the first king of Haloban who was appointed centuries ago by his father, the sultan of Pagaruyung. This slow, ceremonial dance is performed each time a male Islander “becomes a man” (is circumcised) and again when he is married, and

on such occasions the whole community remembers and venerates the ancestors, especially the Pagaruyung ancestors. The *adok* dance tells in song and enacts in dance the ancestral legend of Pagaruyung and its prince who became their first king. Storytellers can tell the whole legend, which is summarised as follows (based on Kartomi 2012: 46):

In the beginning the primal Queen of Pagaruyung, Bundo Kanduang, gave virginal birth to her son Dang Tuanku, the substitute for Allah on earth who ruled over the *luhak nan tigo* (“three district”) kingdom of Pagaruyung with his mother. As it happened, he shared his soul with a poor, uneducated commoner called Cindue Mato, who agreed to carry out most of his wishes, including capturing his future wife, Puti Bungsu, from a distant kingdom. This led to war with Dang Tuanku’s rival in love, Raja Imbang Jayo, whom he fought and eventually had executed. When Dang Tuanku died, Cindue Mato went into exile on the south coast at Indrapura. Eventually he returned to Pagaruyung but found he had to kill Imbang Jayo’s father, who was seeking revenge for his son’s death. The way was then open for Cindue Mato to become the first king of the highlands and the coastal areas of Minangkabau. Meanwhile (according to the legend’s *darék* version), the three other members of the royal family had either ascended to seventh heaven or (according to the south-coastal version) had fled by river and sea boat to Lunang, near Indrapura, where they died and were buried, leaving the son and daughter of Dang Tuanku and Puti Bungsu (Sutan Alam Dunia and Puti Sri Dunia) to rule the Minangkabau and Rao kingdoms respectively. The Sutan married a princess from Aceh but soon divorced her without paying the full bride-wealth, whereupon the king of Aceh punished him by forcing him to surrender the coastal area of Minangkabau to Aceh. (Aceh actually took over the Minangkabau coastal trade outlets in the 16th century and is said to have helped Islamise the people in the early 17th century).

However, the Islanders’ elders emphasise that their ancestral allegiance is only to the former sultanate of Pagaruyung, not to the Minangkabau culture as a whole, the identity of which is quite different from theirs. They are keenly concerned about pointing this difference out.

The other unique item in the Haloban repertoire is the *langser* couples dance, with its *kacukan* Malay-Portuguese dance steps, its foreign-sounding callers’ instructions, its *gandang* musicians’ playing of distinctive Malay rhythmic motifs (*rantak*), and its *biola* player production of diatonic melodies with harmonic implications. But the oral history of this dance only goes back a half-century, whereas *adok*’s is thought to be centuries old. Besides it has clear European components, including the mix of Dutch and Malay words in the caller’s

instructions to the dancers. It is now known that the dance is comparable to the *balanse madam* dance in the villages of Niasan descendants in Padang. True, its steps and structures are somewhat similar, but its Malay-Portuguese *nandung* vocal music and *biola-gandang* accompaniment differ radically in style from the popular-style Minangkabau *orkes gamat*.

The Islanders' practice of the Muslim arts is also differentiated from that of the traditional culture. The women's *dikie* and other largely performance-oriented items are seen as Arab-influenced genres with "a Muslim flavour" (*kesenian yang bernafaskan Islam*), while the men's *dikie* and other devotional genres are regarded as religious expressions developed for the purpose of *dakwah* ("bringing people to Islam") and are referred to as "arts with a Muslim theme" (*kesenian Islam*) (Kartomi 2011:270).

Of course, the *adok* is only one of many genres of traditional music and dance in the Islands. Haloban artists and elders consider the *buai* lullabies, *talibun* intoning, processional *randai* and *gelombang duabelas* dances, and the large *sikambang* repertoire of couples dances with *dendang nandung*, *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment to be part of the musical identity of the whole Banyak Archipelago. Yet the only place where one can currently find complete, all-night performances of that lengthy ceremonial repertoire is Haloban⁸².

Thus, Haloban has all the necessary potential for the creation of a cultural centre of Sumatra's west coastal and offshore island area. With some government and private funding for an imaginative developmental project that is currently being discussed, it could become an attractive venue visited by many local, domestic Indonesian and foreign tourists and eventually serve as an economic powerhouse to generate jobs for locals and invigorate the economy. Details of this project will be discussed in 9.3 below.

⁸² Artists in other population centres in the Banyak Archipelago such as Pulau Balai and Teluk Nibung cannot remember all the items of the *sikambang* dance and song repertoire, thus the performances at their weddings and other ceremonies only go on between ca. 9pm and midnight, after which they go home to sleep.

9.2. The Recent Decline in the Practice of the Islanders' Musical Arts

The elders and leading artists in Haloban feel there has been a decline since *ca.* 1990 in the number of younger villagers who can perform the traditional music and dances. Moreover, opportunities to perform for government and private business functions are quite rare. Yet until very recently the people could only practise their own traditional musical arts, uninfluenced by the national media, at their *baralek*. To this day, few Islanders have television sets and listen to the radio except in the capital Pulau Balai which houses the government communication networks, and in most population centres, including Haloban, the people need to generate their own electricity, which they usually manage to do for a certain number of hours in the day and night.

Thoughtful women and men say that the main reasons for the continuing decline in the practice and maintenance of the Kepulauan Banyak Islanders' traditional musical arts is the growing economic poverty of the people, partly due to ocean trawlers limiting the people's fish catches, the limited choice of available jobs, and the lack of interest shown by most government officials and businesses in sponsoring performances by young members of the few existing *sanggar*. As a result, most village people can no longer afford to celebrate their weddings and other ceremonies with performances over several days and nights as in the past, and they sometimes resort to playing recorded music on cassette players instead. Thus, the level of the performance knowledge and understanding of the traditional arts is diminishing in the population.

Over the past six years I discovered on my field trips that some of the traditional musical items that I recorded on my early trips to Kepulauan Banyak are now rarely performed. Not surprisingly, some artistic leaders are very concerned about this loss (or seeming loss unless revived) and the consequent lack of continuity in some of the Urang Pulo traditions.

As I have noted, however, despite the general decline artists in the Islands' cultural capital, some Haloban artists have maintained their performance knowledge of the repertoire virtually intact. Whenever a well-off host in Haloban presents a domestic *baralek adat*, the *adok* dance, the processions, and the *adat* procedures are presented in the traditional way, and the *sikambang* dancing and music usually continues all night for one night – unlike in the past when they continued for several nights in a row.

Of course, the Islanders' beautiful traditional lullabies are still sung every day by parents to their babies as they swing them to sleep on their hips or in hammocks (see Chapter V). Unlike much other vocal music, but like the *dendang sikambang* repertoire, many lullaby texts are in the local Haloban- Melayu Jamu Pulo ("Islander Malay") speech variety, which differs in some respects from the Melayu Jamu Pasisir (west-coast Sumatran Malay) speech variety and needs to be documented and recorded by linguists before the classical language is lost. These lullabies are important in that they continue to preserve the musical and idiomatic textual traditions of the Urang Pulo. Clearly the lullabies are one genre that has managed to survive the radical changes caused by the forces of modernisation. Presumably this is because the people cannot help but remember the words of endearment and melodies of the lullabies which constituted their first experience of their own music culture, and this then subsequently affects their whole musical lives.

9.3. The Organology and Performance Style of the *Gandang* in Kepulauan Banyak Compared to West-Coastal Sumatra

I shall now discuss the organology, sonic qualities, and performance style of the all-important *gandang* in the *adok Haloban* and other *sikambang* performances. The data gathered indicates that the *gandang* in Kepulauan Banyak is quite different from instruments called *gandang* on Sumatra's west coast between Singkil and Sibolga.

The distinctive facets of the musical identity of Kepulauan Banyak as opposed to that of the culturally related west coastal area of Sumatra between Singkil and Sibolga lies partly in the organological design, sound qualities and performance techniques of their main musical instrument, the *gandang*.

Figures 9.1–9.5 below show the features of the typical locally-crafted *gandang* played in Haloban and other villages and towns in the Islands, while Figure 6 shows a typical *gandang* in Natal, and Figures 9.7–9.8 show two organologically very different drums played in Sibolga. All the *gandang* makers stretch a piece of goat skin to mount on the drum heads, cut and shape *nangka* (jackfruit tree) wood for the body, and cut thick rattan pieces for the rings affixed to the top and bottom sides and thin rattan for the lacing of the head to the body.

The *gandang* in Haloban tend to be considerably smaller in diameter and less deep than on the west coast, and the musicians prefer a sharp resonant sound like that of a small *rapai* in Aceh. Therefore, they have no objection to using a *rapa'i* as a substitute for a *gandang* if necessary, as when performing overseas in a troupe of artists from the various parts of Aceh, as at Monash University in September 2016 (pers. comm., Bp Misri Caniago in Haloban, 17 October 2014). In fact, Bp Misri asked me on my visit to Haloban in 2014 to bring some small *rapa'i* with me from Banda Aceh to give him and his colleagues to play.

Figure 9.1 below shows three views of a *gandang* made by Bp Misri in Haloban. Its skin measures 21cm in diameter and its tapering sides measure 4cm in depth (the photos were taken in 17 October 2014). **Figures 9.2** shows drums that had been made by an unknown musician in Suka Makmur (photos taken on 12 October 2014). The head consists of a tautly stretched piece of buffalo skin. While playing, the musician who sits cross-legged holds the top of his *gandang* on his lap in upright position, with the fingers of both hands extending over the edge, and makes a sharp, short, high-pitched sound called *ba* by beating 2 or 3 fingers of his

right hand on the edge of the skin and simultaneously damping it with the fingers of his left hand.

Figure 9.1: Three views of a *gandang* made by Bp Misri in Haloban.



Figure 9.2 (album 3/1): A *gandang* player sitting cross-legged on a chair instead of on the floor playing the *ba* sound.



When the musician wants to produce a *dum* sound, he beats four flattened fingers around 4 cm. from the edge while lifting his left hand so that the sound is not damped but is free to resonate (as in Figure 9.3, just before left hand lifts).



Figure 9.3 (album 4): The player sits cross-legged (not shown) holding the top of the upright *gandang* on his lap and makes a low-pitched, resonant sound (called *dum*).

When the player wants to tauten the skin of the drum, he tightens the sturdy rattan rings around the back of his *gandang* and the sound is brighter when beaten. He can further tauten it by holding it for a few moments next to a fire or heater. Note the H-shaped rattan lacing and knot-ties stretching from the skin to the back ring (see Figure 9.4).



Figure 9.4 (album 3/2): The player holds the drum by its lower rim and pulls the rattan squares tighter, or leaves it in front of a flame for a few minutes.



Figure 9.5: Collection of all other *gandang* now played in Haloban.



Figure 9.6: Front and back views of a *gandang* in Natal (photo taken 1 November 2014).



Figure 9.7: Two views of a *gandang* from Sibolga (photo taken 3 November 2014).



Figure 9.8: A recently made thick-sided *gandang* in Sibolga (photo taken 3 November 2014).

9.4. Revitalising the Arts and Culture of the Banyak Archipelago as part of the Greater Malay West-Coastal and Offshore Island Area of Sumatra

The Haloban elders' and artists' modes of identity construction and fascinating history are reflected in their expressive arts and culture and their unique based Bahasa Haloban, which need to be revitalised for the sake of their self-confidence as a people and their future economic and political development.

Of the twelve factors that Catherine Grant (2014: 300) adapted from UNESCO's "Language, Vitality and Endangerment" document⁸³ for her "Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework", artists and elders in Haloban believe that transgenerational transmission is most important, for the number of young practitioners and participants in four of the active towns and villages is generally declining, and it is important that primary and secondary schools and private *sanggar* (art troupes and training centres) be assisted with the provision of wings and other stage equipment, costumes, musical instruments, amplification equipment, and opportunities to perform in public. This is especially important as the context and function of some items are changing. For example, the sacred *adok* dance was adapted for stage presentation by boys and girls facing each other in a long line at the Green Turtle Festival of

⁸³ UNESCO, 2000. "The Dukar Framework for Action-Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments", Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/mahes/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>>

Folklife in Haloban in 2010; and a quite different though more authentic version was adapted for the concert performance at Monash University in 2016. Grant also mentioned that attracting the media is a way of invigorating endangered culture.

The Islanders' elders and leading artists spent some time discussing the essential expressions of their identity in the lead up to the Green Turtle Festival and associated competitions held in Pulau Balai in 2010. They chose to train school girls and boys to present stage versions of two dances usually performed at traditional ceremonies as symbols of their identity, and I was able to video-record both. In Pulau Balai, a choreographer and local *adok* dancer taught the local school boys and girls to perform a new version (*kreasi baru*) of the sacred *adok* dance at a public evening performance on an open-air stage in Pulau Balai. They also chose to train school girl and boy couples in Teluk Nibung to perform the umbrella (*payung*) dance accompanied by a pair of elderly male musicians – a *biola* player who played *dendang Pulau Pinang* in the usual elaborately ornamented melodic style and a *gandang* player. On the occasion of the Festival, the Governor of Aceh made an unprecedented visit to Haloban, and was entertained with some dance performances. A few days after his visit, we also visited Haloban where local artists presented rehearsed performances of select *sikambang* dances (as described in Chapter IV) and *nandung* music.

At the time of writing, attention is being drawn for the first time to the position of the Banyak Archipelago within to the whole west-coastal Sumatran and offshore islander area and the historical facts of its cultural unity over the centuries. Thus, plans are afoot to present a “Festival of Sikambang Arts in the Malay West-Coast and Offshore Island Area of Sumatra” in Haloban in December 2017. The plan is to invite and ship visiting artists from (i) offshore islands including Simeulue, Nias, Pulau Musala (off the coast of Natal), Pulau Cut (opposite Tiku), the Mentawai Islands, Enggano, and Pulau Pinang (opposite Krui in Lampung) and (ii) west-coast Sumatran towns including Singkil, Barus, Jago-jago, Sorkam, Natal Sibolga, Muko-

muko, Bengkulu and Manna to perform with Banyak Archipelago artists at the Festival, which will include many rare concert performances that will be videoed by television and other media crews. An international conference will be held simultaneously with television crews and the press invited to expose the event and its political, economic and cultural implications for the area's future development as a whole.

I flatter myself that this awareness of the unity of Haloban's culture is partly due to my own research findings and my comparisons with Kartomi's data collected on Sumatra's west coast centres in the 1970s and 1980s, which have helped delineate the main artistic expressions of Islander culture in its pan-west-coast Sumatran and offshore islands context. I am told that the administrators' and elders' growing awareness of the greater Malay west-coast Sumatran and offshore islands has grown partly from Haloban's master musician Bp Anhar's and my travels to meet artists along Sumatra's west coast and gather data on Urang Pulo relationships with other offshore islands, especially Simeulue and Nias, and partly from Monash University's and Seuramoe Aceh's presentation of the International Conference and Cultural Event of Aceh in Melbourne in September 2016, with support from Aceh's Department of Culture and Tourism and Museum, and the Department of Education and Culture in Jakarta.

In order to take advantage of the momentum so raised, Bp Anhar, Bp Reza Pahlevi (Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Department in Banda Aceh) and I have been working in 2015-2016 with government and private business leaders, including the famous Acehnese singer Rafly, who is now one of the members of Education, Arts and Culture Committee at the Regional Representative Council of Republic Indonesia in Jakarta, to implement an ambitious plan with potentially significant effects on the lives of the Banyak Islanders and their greater geographical area. The staff and students of the University of Syiah Kuala will be involved, including its Centre for the Arts, some students of which have already visited Haloban and learned to perform its *adok* dance.

The plan is (i) to ship active village artists and knowledgeable elders in west-coastal Sumatran and offshore island villages to Haloban in December 2017 to perform at the proposed Festival of Malay *Sikambang* Arts, (ii) to coordinate the simultaneous presentation of a Workshop for artists to compare their versions of the common *sikambang* music, dance and drama repertoire and associated legends and train young performers, and (iii) to hold an International Conference on the arts and ceremonial traditions of the greater Sumatra's Malay West-Coast and Offshore Island Area. We are hopeful of attracting support from the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ibu Susi Pudjiastuti, who frequently visits the Simeulue Islands just north of the Banyak Archipelago and is actively improving the lives of Indonesian fishermen, and also the support of Indonesia's President Joko Widodo/Jokowi, who has shown great support for Minister Susi's marine initiatives.

9.4.1. Building a *Rumah Budaya* in Haloban to revitalise the Banyak Islands' culture and expose the Pan-Sumatran West-Coastal Culture as symbolised by the Area's *Sikambang* Arts

In addition to festivals and competitions, which doubtless stimulate troupes of artists to rehearse and perform the traditional arts and new creations in public venues, I believe the most powerful way to revitalise the Urang Pulo traditional arts on a continuing basis would be to provide private and government funding for local Haloban inhabitants to build a well-designed Rumah Budaya (Cultural House) of local timber with natural air conditioning in the architectural style of the former Haloban palace, with a salary for a Director and a few employees who would plan and execute programs in the Islands' five main population centres. The Director must be a highly respected dancer and/or musician with a vision for revitalising the arts for all Urang Pulo and work to attract a continual supply of visitors.

The construction would contain large rooms and outdoor and indoor stages for regular traditional music and dance rehearsals and performances and the creation of new dances and musical items. Also, necessary would be a multi-room museum with storage space containing

copies of former royal *silsilah* and pre-colonial, colonial and Indonesian national documents of relevance to Haloban's and the Islands' history, as well as local artefacts, handicrafts, costumes, musical instruments and historical work tools of inhabitants.

Users of the performance spaces, museum and library would not only include locals but also domestic and international tourists and visiting university student groups. Recently a group of students from Syiah Kuala University visited and learnt to perform the *adok* dance in Haloban from expert dance teachers and musicians in June 2016, living with Haloban families in homestays; they are now teaching members of the university *sanggar* and other *sanggars* in Banda Aceh. The Rumah Budaya would stimulate the creation of a variety of service jobs which Haloban residents desperately need as supplemental income to the limited proceeds of their fishing and farming pursuits, including employees in restaurants serving the excellent local fresh seafood and local dishes, and other retail shops.

A key developmental factor of the Centre would be to welcome traditional artists and elders from the greater west-coast Sumatran and offshore islander area to spend time in Haloban teaching and performing their items of expressive culture and assist the Museum curator to document its items on display or in storage.

As part of the grand plan, a duplicate museum should also be created in Singkil or Sibolga to maximise the effects of the Haloban museum and cultural centre, and for security in case of future natural disasters.

9.5. Conclusion

For decades, the Urang Pulo have remained a marginalised, forgotten and neglected constituency in the province of Aceh, including in their own *kabupaten* of Aceh Singkil. Governments and private businesses have not seen fit to develop the electricity system, communications, roads, public buildings, and public transport outside the main town of Pulau

Balai, sometimes excusing their inaction by pointing to the area's periodic tsunamis, the lack of clarity of communal land ownership⁸⁴, and the competing resource demands of mainland areas. Few Islanders outside Pulau Balai have access to television, labour-saving devices, and mobile phones, and the internet is not normally available⁸⁵. Nor has the national government's Department of Education and Culture or Aceh's Department of Culture and Tourism actively sought to promote knowledge of and practice of the local arts as in many other parts of Indonesia⁸⁶.

Yet as Bp Anhar's and my research in the 2010s and comparisons with Kartomi's data and findings in the 1970s and 1980s have shown, the Islands have a rich expressive culture which is part of, yet distinctive from, that of the broader culture of Sumatra's Malay west-coast and offshore island area as a whole. The Islanders have a coherent historical narrative and a unified cultural identity based on their distinctive Jamu-Lingbano-based Bahasa Haloban and the cultural memory of their golden age – the Tuangku kingdom, with its links to neighbouring islands, west coast towns such as Barus and Sibolga, and – for their very origin legend - the sultanate of Pagaruyung. They also trace their moderate Islamic belief and practices, including the male and female *dikie* intoning, call to prayer and Qur'an-reading, to the sultanate.

⁸⁴ Until the mid-twentieth century in the Tuangku kingdom there were customary laws for member households that gave direction to the joint use of the undivided land belonging to the members of a local community as a whole and refusal to grant free access to outsiders without permission. "The commons included both specific lands and the traditional community institution that determines that carrying capacity for its various subunits and defines the rights and obligations of those who use it, with penalties for lapses" (Snyder 1990: 30-1, writing on theory of "the commons"). But when the Dutch and later the Indonesian governments imposed political borders of residencies and *kabupaten* and in the Suharto era, *kecamatan*, traditional communal patterns of land ownership were disrupted. In fact the view of the commons as traditional, local, and regulated by community fits expressive culture as well as land- anything that is learned and transmitted as heritage (Titon 2016: 490).

⁸⁵ Sometimes poor families play music on cassette players for entertainment, including at their weddings, if they can borrow the equipment, but that is often the limit of their modern devices.

⁸⁶ Unlike the performing arts of Java and other parts of Indonesia, which were largely regulated by the national arts policies of the Department of Education and Culture out of the national capital Jakarta, the performance of the musical arts has been affected by the marginalisation of the Urang Pulo which has resulted in their social neglect.

In my view, it is not possible to rejuvenate the Banyak Islanders' arts genre by genre, as recommended by Grant (2012). They should be revitalised as a whole and in connection with the great west-coast Sumatran and offshore Islander area. For the Islanders' rich cultural heritage is part and parcel of the culture of Sumatra's long west coast, extending from Pulau Pisang (near Krui) in the south to Calang in Aceh in the north, and including the offshore islands.

This invaluable common property of the Islanders could serve as a sound basis for planning collaborative strategies of resilience meant not only to resolve social problems and develop a sound economy but also to build up the Islanders' self-confidence as a people and help them cope with the profound cultural change with which they will increasingly be faced.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has brought the musical arts and oral history of the Islanders (Urang Pulo) living in the Banyak Archipelago to the ethnomusicological stage for the first time. It has documented, classified and analysed samples of the traditional arts that include musical sound, pieced together what can currently be known of the Islanders' general and musical history, and investigated the tenets of their identity and its musical expressions. It has also discussed the dilemmas that the elders, artists and other thinking people feel about the current decline in the practice of their traditional arts and the need to revitalise and develop them as part of their plans for future development within the Sumatran west coastal and offshore island area.

The current project builds on and extends the research by Sumatranist ethnomusicologists such as Margaret Kartomi, Megan Collins, Jennifer Fraser, Bart Barendregt, David. J. Goldsworthy, Liberty Manik, Ashley Tuner, Yoshika Okazaki, Lynette Moore, Mauly Purba and Iwan Amir. Its original contributions to ethnomusicological knowledge of Sumatra lie in its : (i) creation of an archive of documented field audio- and audio-visual recordings, photographs and video recordings of the formerly unknown Malay music-culture of the Banyak Islands deposited in the Music Archive of Monash University (in 2010-2016); (ii) reconstruction of the history, genealogy and musical arts of the former Haloban court on Tuangku Island; (iii) classification and analyses of both the indigenous and the syncretic genres of the musical arts; and (iv) delineation of the Islanders' artistic connections with the west-coastal Sumatran mainland, especially in the urban and rural areas in and around the west-coastal towns of Singkel, Barus, Sorkam, Botot, Sibolga, Jago-Jago, Natal, Saniang Baka and Pagaruyung.

The project's original theoretical contributions to the discipline of ethnomusicology primarily lie in the areas of (i) music-cultural identity, (ii) identity and place; (iii) vocal quality, (iv) culture contact, (v) kingship and its musical symbols in pre-colonial Malay courts, (vi) gender and emotional expression in performance, and (vii) music endangerment and revitalisation theory in recent modernising times. I shall now discuss these issues one by one.

10.1 Music-Cultural Identity

The Islanders' concept of cultural identity (*identitas*) is coloured by their maritime archipelagic environment and relative isolation in the Pacific Ocean, their Animist and Sufi-tinged Muslim beliefs, the legends and cultural memory of their former Tuangku kingdom with its links to former mainland Sumatran sultanates and neighbouring Simeulue and Ono Niha cultures, and their pride in their rich *sikambang* –based ceremonial music, dance, bardic and martial arts, including the lyrics sung in their unique Devayan-Sinabang influenced Haloban language. It is also related to the people's peripheral contact with European powers in the colonial era and their initially buoyant and later depressingly neglected experience as part of Independent Indonesia.

As Henry Johnson wrote on the general concept of identity (2011: 1, 2):

The notion of crossing cultures in expressions of musical and cultural identity is a phenomenon inherent in many styles of music, old and new. As a construct that provides a reference point for locating cultural or national affiliation or association, the notion of cultural identity is a contested term. On the one hand, it gives a sense of social harmony, a unified social group who share many cultural and social traits. On the other hand, however, identity formation is far more complex, often exhibiting multiple sites of affiliation and crossing social and cultural margins.

Through music, as one cultural form, people express individual and cultural identity in complex ways. The inherent eclecticism of many creative arts can often provide distinct examples of composers or performers working within and across cultural boundaries. While transculturation may at times not be a surface-level experience, there are often examples of music and musicians working distinctly across real and perceived cultural frontiers. There is also social hybridity where the movement of people and their diasporic flows create social contexts of transcultural relevance. Traditional and new music forms are often constructed across cultures, moving between and across real and imagined boundaries.

This study of the Banyak Islanders' music-cultural identity confirms the notion that constructs of identity reflect the group's sense of social harmony, unity, and shared cultural and social traits.

According to the elders, leading artists, and other men and women in Haloban, it is the *sikambang* genre that really defines the Islander music-cultural tradition and constitutes its most completely representative form, just as *gamelan* and *wayang* are said to epitomise the music-cultural identity of the Javanese people, and the Shakespearian plays to typify the Elizabethan English theatre tradition. *Sikambang* music divides into (i) the unaccompanied, free-metred solo singing of classical poetry with melody that is totally free of harmonic and other characteristics of foreign origin and (ii) the singing of Malay-style melodies accompanied on the *biola* with European-influenced, harmonically generated melody and entirely indigenous cyclic rhythms played on one or a number of *gandang* frame drums

However, the research also delineates some distinctive characteristics of the Jamu-Malay Islanders' vocal music, dances, and instrumental music viewed in their ritual context. This excludes their devotional exercises such as *dikie* as well as the Malay, Indonesian and international popular and folk songs performed by young islanders in the only town with paved roads and constant electricity supply – Pulau Balai – and on the media.

10.2. Identity and 'Place'

As Martin Stokes has suggested (Stokes 1997), musical identity can be understood from various angles, including a focus on discursive evocations of 'place'. Comparison of musical situations as they relate to the Islands' three main population centres discussed in this thesis – Haloban, Teluk Nibung and Pulau Balai, shows that although they share the same feeling of isolation from the rest of the world and neglect in their Pacific Ocean location far from

mainland Sumatra, each claim to possess a separate identity, and it tends to come to the fore when preparing for a big event such as the Green Turtle Folklife Festival in 2010. Discussions of their identities are beginning again in the preparation for the Festival of the Sikambang Arts of West-Coastal Sumatra and Offshore Islands planned to be held in Haloban in December 2018. No doubt neighbouring population centres along Sumatra's west coast and certain offshore islands that practice their versions of the *sikambang* culture will also try to delineate their particular identities in the lead up to the Festival, as will migrant populations from Haloban such as Sifahando village (in North Nias Regency of Nias Island) who had to move to other places after their homes were destroyed by the 2004 tsunami but can still remember how to perform the *sikambang* dances learned from visiting teachers from Haloban.

The elders in the three 'places' - Haloban, Teluk Nibung and Pulau Balai - define their identities of place as follows:

The first 'place' - Haloban, is the cultural centre of the Banyak Archipelago and heir to the former Haloban court where Bahasa Haloban/Lingbano was spoken. Its people know the royal origin legend, the local *adat istiadat*, the sacred *adok* dance accompanied by the "drum of sovereignty", the local performance style of *sikambang* ceremonial arts, the royal heirlooms, and other vestiges of the former royal tradition. Moreover, Haloban's leading artists are the only ones in the Islands who know how to perform the complete royal repertoire, especially the sacred ancestral-honouring *adok* dance and the syncretic *langser* entertainment dance. If a Haloban host can convince the *ninik mamak* that he can afford to present a full-scale *baralek adat*, then all the men present dance the whole *sikambang* repertoire (including the *langser* dance) from 9pm to 8am, and continue the next night, unlike in Teluk Nibung and Pulau Balai, where only a few of the *sikambang* dances are remembered and no-one knows how to perform the *adok* and *langser* dances.

Until 1965 Haloban also had the busiest harbour in the Islands, serving as the main port of call for boats sailing from Sibolga, Barus and Singkil to Simeulue and Nias and with many fishing boats used and managed by local men. Haloban lost its status as capital of the Banyak Archipelago, its administrative role and its government buildings in 1965-66 when the Suharto government moved its administrative centre to Pulau Balai in punishment for its alleged Communist/PKI activities. It has still not recovered, with its infrastructure neglected and its electricity generator producing its daily electricity supply only until 6pm, after which the people live by candlelight. In 2004, when some of its houses were flooded by the tsunami waves, the Indonesian Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (BRR) decided to build scores of new houses for the displaced inhabitants in a new village called Asantola, a few hundred metres away. Haloban will be the place for the Festival of the Sikambang Arts of West-Coastal Sumatra and Offshore Islands in 2018, with the guests and tourists expected to taste local homestay hospitality.

The second 'place' - Teluk Nibung, is a smaller population centre which can also claim ancestral status because it is named in the ancestral legend (see Chapter III) as the location of the first home of Tataan, the earliest – pre-royal - settler in the islands. However, Teluk Nibung suffers somewhat from its reputation as a dangerous place of sorcery and black magic and therefore a place not to be visited if one can help it. Whenever a *baralek* is presented there the host needs to invite artists from Haloban to refresh the dancers' memory and swell their number so that they can perform the dances, though they can usually only manage to perform from around 9pm to midnight, including some repeats. In 2010 a local *talibun* artist and a *biola* player taught local primary school boys and girls to perform the *tari payung* couples dance to their *dendang Pulau Pinang* musical accompaniment (chapter VII) for the Green Turtle Festival, sailing to Pulau Balai for the performance but also dancing in the school yard in Teluk Nibung.

The third ‘place’ – Pulau Balai, has the largest population but none of the ancestral aura of Haloban and Teluk Nibung. It was just a tiny fishing village until the Suharto government moved the Islands’ capital from “Communist-tainted” Haloban to its shores on Balai Island. It is the only centre at present that has a more-or-less reliable 24-hour electricity supply, paved roads, and a health centre. As in Teluk Nibung, a Pulau Balai *baralek* host needs to invite artists from Haloban and Teluk Nibung to swell the number of men dancing the *sikambang* repertoire until around midnight.

Another research finding is that the Urang Pulo’s musical identity differs in some respects from the west-coastal mainland between Singkil and Sibolga, though they are clearly related. The Urang Pulo focus more on vocal music, though most of the men can join in the frame drum playing at all-night *sikambang* dancing sessions at weddings and circumcisions, and they like to hear their *biola* players intoning the harmonically generated melodies to accompany the solo *sikambang* singers. As my organological comparison of the instruments called *gandang* in west-coastal Sumatra show, the *gandang* in the Islanders’ and the west coastal dwellers’ *gandang* differ somewhat in their organological designs, sound qualities, and performance techniques (chapter IX).

In addition, this thesis has found that the Islanders’ concept of identity is radically different from the local *kabupaten* government’s view, which is based on the official cultural policy of the national-level Department of Education and Culture’s view that many of Indonesia’s traditional art forms are “too rough, too crude: not respectable” and in need of “development;” and this has had a sanitising effect (Yampolsky 1995: 711). One result of this policy is the fact that a small number of the Islanders’ traditional dances have been “developed” commercially for media and tourist consumption as *kreasi baru* (‘new creations’).

As we have seen, the Banyak Islanders' traditional music culture is ceremonial, not commercial in its function and orientation. However, unlike in many traditional societies in Indonesia, commercial interests have hardly touched the music and dance to date, and young people who perform the popular music for their own entertainment and occasionally on the media are at present limited only to the town of Pulau Balai.⁸⁷

10.3. Vocal Quality

Another of this thesis' main findings is the deep value that the Islanders' and west coastal Sumatran's attribute to the sound qualities of a loudly-carrying human voice, which is of great practical importance when communicating between boats at sea or boats and land and when calling people to attend a traditional wedding, circumcision or other celebration. The volume, timbre and improvisatory melodic ornamental skills of the expert *penampik* in Haloban's sacred and unique *adok* dance therefore represents the epitome of vocal performance skills, though all *pendendang* vocalists aim to attain the same beautiful sound quality. Indeed, the entire *sikambang* musical culture is primarily vocally oriented, though of course *biola* and *gandang* instrumental accompaniment and group frame drum playing are also valued.

In addition, when an expert or well-established *pendendang* intones a lyric or narrative (such as a *dendang* or a *hikayat*) in *pantun* or *syair* verse or in prose form, his voice brings out the social meanings of the words intoned and evokes an emotional response in the listener.⁸⁸ The same applies to an expert *buai* singer of the large repertoire of lullabies sung every day by parents to their small children today, and it is also applied to the formal baby-thanksgiving

⁸⁷ The governments of Indonesia at the national, provincial, district and subdistrict levels have a history of taking a direct interest in the performing arts. The New Order government under Suharto engaged in discourse about the 'development' of the regional traditional arts⁸⁷. Between 2010 and 2016, the period focussed on in this thesis, this discourse has hardly affected the Kepulauan Banyak, where little has been done to foster the traditional arts until the lead-up to the 2010 Green Turtle Festival, and little has been done at the official level since, though the efforts to promote tourism and therefore the more glamorous song-dances and pop music bands continues.

⁸⁸ In her study of Malay texts that refer to Malay vocal music, Jennifer McCallum has shown that European scholars of Malay "oral literature", especially in the colonial era, hardly ever referred to this important aesthetic fact (McCallum, in press).

ceremonies that were once commonly held in the Islands and along Sumatra's west coast in the 1970s and 1980s (Kartomi 2012: 226-231). Expert intoners of the Qur'an and callers of worshippers to prayer are also greatly admired for the quality and carrying power of their voice and their skills in intoning or calling with the appropriate Egyptian feel, which is important in the Islands and Sumatra's west coast (as opposed to the Arabic feel in Jakarta, see Rasmussen 2005: 69).

10.4. Culture Contact and Transculturation

This research has exposed three cases of genres resulting from prolonged culture contact between music-cultures and their consequent transformation or transculturation⁸⁹ into a new style in the Islands and west-coastal Sumatra. They are the *dendang sikambang*, *langser madam*, and *balanse madam* dances with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment (see chapter VII).

The first outcome of Portuguese-Malay contact – *dendang sikambang* – likely developed during and immediately after the Portuguese colonial empire in Southeast Asia (1511-1641) when their African and Asian household slaves in Melaka learnt to play violins and other European instruments to accompany their masters' mixed-couple dance parties in Melaka and Portuguese folk songs and dances (Boxer 1969:43). After the Portuguese left Southeast Asia in 1641, their former household slaves sought work in other parts of the archipelago where they

⁸⁹ As noted in chapter VI, Waterman (1952: 287) and Nettl (1978: 131) proposed that two cultures in contact are more likely to produce a syncretic or hybrid musical result if the two cultures possess "compatible traits". However, my attempts to apply the theory and translate it into practice proved unfruitful. If it is not compatible musical traits, then what kind of situation determines whether musical syncretism is likely to occur? Whinnin in Hymes (1971:105ff) proposed that the parallels between language and music may offer a clue, for both are symbolic expressions of culture. Pidgin languages arise when, say, a colonial culture such as the Portuguese impacts on a subordinate culture (as in west-coastal Sumatra in 1511-1641), with the dominant culture strongly influencing the colonised one. This explains why - after the Portuguese left in 1641 and their slaves moved to Tugu and other parts of the Indonesian archipelago, the Portuguese-Malay linguistic patois and the harmonically conceived *kroncong* music genre arose in Tugu (Jakarta) during the Portuguese empire. And the Sumatran *sikambang kapri*, *langser madam* and *balanse madam* musics played on a *biola* and frame drums are likely to have resulted from a similar situation. In her 1981 article, Kartomi argued that the term "acculturation" (literally meaning "adding cultures together") is less suitable than the terms "synthesis", "syncretism" and "transculturation," and I have used the latter term to describe the radical stylistic transformations that resulted from contact in the cases I looked at. Because they involve a complete transformation of the musics in contact, I find the term "transculturation" is the most appropriate term to use.

and others apparently combined what they knew of the Portuguese folk couples dances and songs with Malay *joget* dances and songs, producing various syncretic genres such as *kroncong* in Java and *biola and gandang*-accompanied *dendang sikambang* on Sumatra's west coast and offshore islands such as Nias, which the Portuguese are known to have visited. This scenario supports the likelihood that syncretism or transculturation, to use Kartomi's term, does not follow from brief contact and the transfer of a few discrete traits but only from long-term contact and the exchange of transforming traits such as harmony in non-harmonic Malay music, including, in this case: slow and fast Malay *joget* couples dance steps and slow and fast Portuguese couples-dance hopping steps, 'improvisational' singing styles, and instruments and playing styles from both cultures (Portuguese *biola* and Malay *gandang*).

The *langser madam* couples song-dance with *biola and gandang* accompaniment is thought to date back about only sixty years, when an Ona Niha fisherman is said to have seen a European quadrille-related *lancer* couples dance with a caller and European popular music danced on a Dutch ship sailing from Sibolga to Simeulue in the 1950s, and was so impressed with it that he taught it to the men in Haloban who absorbed it into their all-night *sikambang* song-dance tradition at *baralek* ceremonies. But the Haloban people were selective – they adopted the Dutch dance style and mixed its facets with those of their own *sikambang* couples dancing, accompanying it with their own *sikambang* singing with *biola* and *gandang* accompaniment, and they combined the Dutch words in the caller's instructions with their own Jamu Pulo words, creating a barely comprehensible text.

In my analysis, the *langser madam* process is an example of "double transculturation" by a circuitous route. It resulted from the earlier Portuguese-Malay transculturation resulting in *sikambang* followed by a second, much later process of Dutch-Islander transculturation. The *balanse madam* dance in the Padang villages of Niasan descendants with Minangkabau *orkes*

gamat accompaniment involving Portuguese, Malay and Minangkabau contact dates from centuries back and the *orkes gamat* component from the early twentieth century.

These three cases exemplify the class nature of culture contact situations in colonial times. In the case of the first and last example above, the contact was between exponents of the colonial power and the subordinate servant or slave class, and in the second case, the contact was between upper class colonials and poor rural villagers. It often happens in such cases that members of the subordinate class regard the art form of their colonial masters as prestigious, making them want to emulate the upper class. This thesis' contribution to ethnomusicological culture contact theory includes the concept of double transculturation and the observation that class can be a determinant of transculturation.

10.5. Kingship and its Musical Symbols in Pre-Colonial Malay Courts⁹⁰

This thesis also makes a small contribution to method in historical ethnomusicology. In general, the evidence of the prevailing concept of kingship that operated in the Tuangku kingdom at Haloban resembles the concept of kingship held in the few Malay courts that have been subject to detailed study (Reid and Brakel 1975, Matheson and Andaya 1982). It holds that the authority of the king, *sutan* or sultan had to be supported by symbols of sovereignty. But whereas the kings in Pagaruyung, Riau-Lingga and other strategically located major courts

⁹⁰ Early research into Malay concepts of kingship by Anthony Reid, Virginia Matheson, Lode Brakel, Lance Castles, Leonard Andaya, Barbara Andaya and others was published in a book edited by Anthony Reid and Lance Castles in 1975. The editors concluded that each royal court in Malay Southeast Asia was initially based on a small village polity. Some of them were raised in status later, depending on whether they became active trade centres, such as in 15th century Kerajaan Melaka and 17th-19th century Kerajaan Lingga in the Riau archipelago (but not of course tiny courts in relatively isolated areas such as the Banyak Archipelago). All the courts these scholars studied had a tenuous, symbolic hold on power through possession of their royal *pusaka* (symbols of sovereignty), including musical instruments, especially unique local forms of drums. In many courts the raja or sultan owned a *nobat* ensemble that was initially transplanted from the Middle East or Moghul India, containing the sacred *nekara* drum as it is called in the Riau Archipelago. The editors concluded that perceptions of power, of kingship and of state in these neighbouring traditions shared many features, but that scholars need to study many more Malay courts to avoid being misled by external values (1975: vii). I have compared their studies with mine in the former Tuangku court and found some similarities and several important differences, especially in the significance of their sacred *gandang* (frame drum). The Tuangku court is a rare example of a tiny court of the kind never before studied by other scholars.

possessed *nobat* ensembles of Middle Eastern and Moghul origin and grandly titled pieces of music as essential symbols of sovereignty, the symbol of kingly power in the minor court at Haloban was the sacred *adok* dance and accompanying drum. In this very slow dance by a royal descendant as he enters adulthood at his circumcision and later his wedding ceremony with three male friends, the *penampik* sang long poetic lyrics about the Pagaruyung ancestors to his own elaborately ornamented, free metred melody and accompaniment of sparse slow rhythms on the sacred *gandang*. *Adok* is not allowed to be presented anywhere in the Islands except at Haloban; and it must be performed by four well-trained dancers (one of whom can preferably claim royal blood) in an extremely solemn atmosphere and in full *adat* costume below a ceiling full of elaborate, symbolically meaningful decorations hanging over a *pelaminan* throne. This very slow music and dance resembles the extremely slow pace of the male or female *sina* dance in neighbouring Nias, accompanied only by a vocalist intoning extremely highly ornamented streams of melody with a spare, free-metred drum part (pers. comm. Margaret Kartomi, who recorded a *sina* performance at Hilisimatanoe in Nias in 1971).

An interesting aspect of the nature of power and government in multi-cultural, pre-*raja* Haloban was the belief, as written in the ancestral genealogy (*trombo*), that the Banyak Archipelago was once ruled by a consortium of five *datuk*/elders who were immigrants from various Simeulue, Batak Toba, and Batak Mandailing locales, and they were in charge of security, agriculture, marine and fishing affairs, social affairs respectively. Eventually, however, their ceremonial *adat* needs and socio-political affairs became so complex that they requested a royal prince be sent from Pagaruyung to rule over them (as shown in chapter III). Women were excluded from these legendary accounts, except as home and meal providers. Such details about many more petty Malay kingdoms than just Haloban need to be collected before we can generalise about the nature of power in the former Malay courts.

10.6. Gender and Emotional Expression in Performance

Village society in the Islands strictly distinguishes between the male and female sexes in their work pursuits, life styles and opportunities for self-expression and emotion in the music, dance, bardic arts, and martial arts. The men, who are mainly fishermen, sailors, agricultural workers or - in recent times - government bureaucrats, mostly work outside the home and in some cases go abroad/*merantau* to seek their fortune, while the married women and elderly spinsters stay at home caring for the home and family, forgoing any participation in artistic performances at ceremonies or on stage.

Until their mid-teens, girls and boys are allowed to dance in mixed couples at wedding and other *baralek*, and recently some have been trained at school by expert village artists to perform couples dances such as *tari payung* and *tari adok*, with male musicians accompanying them with vocal music or *biola* playing of harmonically-generated melodies and motivically-generated rhythmic *gandang* drumming (see chapters V and VI).

At adult *baralek* performances, however, men play both the male and the female roles in the couples dancing (chapter IV). For it is regarded as unseemly for a married woman or spinster to sing or dance in public, else it be thought she is showing off her body. The men and the women take pains to point out the practice is not based on the orthodox Muslim taboo preventing the sexes from singing or dancing together, but is simply the most efficient and traditional division of work.

However, some women sing *dendang sikambang* in secret while they are out of hearing in the forest as an outlet for their emotions and artistic self-expression (Chapter V). When the men are asked what they feel emotionally as they sing a solo *sikambang*-style song or perform the *adok* dance, they normally answer in an iconically signifying manner (to use Turino's semiotic parlance, Turino *ibid.*) that they are engaging in nostalgic feelings for the golden age of the

former kingdom and respect for the ancestors. If the women are asked what they feel as they sing *sikambang* in secret in the forest, they answer in a highly individualistic, personal, indexically signifying manner (*a la* Turino) that while singing and pouring out their emotions they feel sad and depressed as they remember and improvise lyrics about lost love and other opportunities throughout their lives. Yet both men and women also single out *dendang* *sikambang* and other items of the traditional arts as representations of their identity, heritage and Islander lifestyle.

In recent decades, some women have joined *dikie/dikir* and *qasidah* vocal groups and enjoyed singing religious and secular texts from song books in public after attending regular rehearsals in each other's homes. In this activity, they are actually beginning to negotiate a more public view of their female Muslim Islander identity (see further Blackburn 2006, 2008).

10.7. Sustainability and Revitalisation

Over the past six years or so I have noticed an overall decline in the practice of the arts in the Islands' five active population centres. Even in Haloban, “*adat*-based ceremonies” that last a minimum of three days and nights are rarely held; most are “*hukum*-based” and last only one day and night, including a procession around the streets and performances of only a few *sikambang* song-dances. Thus, opportunities to perform and sustain the whole *sikambang* repertoire have been reduced.

No longer is the culture transmitted orally to the majority of young people, which is resulting in the decline in the interest to learn to perform the traditional music and dances, even in the cultural centre of Haloban. Some young people are occasionally given the opportunity to be trained in the private *sanggars* or, in a few cases, at school when they are preparing for a festival or other cultural event. There are three *sanggar* in operation, but they have only been given minimal funding by political parties or local government at election time. Thus, the talent pool

of orally-trained young artists is continually shrinking. Moreover, many individual artists and groups, e.g. of women performing devotional and entertainment songs rely on written texts rather than spontaneously inventing new rhyming verses or modifying old pantun and syair, and *talibun* bards are now rare.

The most pervasive effects on the viability of the traditional arts in the Islanders' only centre with a regular power supply - Pulau Balai, is modern technology and the media. However, the people in the other population centres also spend less time and musical energy on the arts, and this leads to loss of repertoire. Of the twelve factors that Grant adapted from UNESCO's "Language, Vitality and Endangerment" paper for her "Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework," transgenerational transmission is most important.

An important result of my field research in the 2010s and its comparisons with Kartomi's data and findings in the 1970s and 1980s is the knowledge and recordings we have accumulated of the Islanders' distinctive ceremonial arts within the broader culture of Sumatra's Malay west-coast and offshore island area as a whole. It is therefore advisable to take advantage of the Islanders' rich cultural heritage as part and parcel of the *sikambang* culture of Sumatra's long west coast and offshore island area, extending from Pulau Pisang (near Krui) in the south to Calang in Aceh in the north, though the styles and cultural contexts in each centre differ from each other in many ways.

For the Islanders' conservational dilemma is not their responsibility alone. The whole west-coastal population of Sumatra needs to be mobilised to solve their common cultural dilemma and help them fight for the proper infrastructure and economic development of the Islands by revitalising their rich *sikambang* heritage, not only to save the *sikambang* art forms from extinction and expose them to the world but also for the maintenance of the local people's sense of identity and self-confidence.

The chosen motto of the forthcoming festival is a quotation of the *isi* (meaningful couplet) of a well-known maritime *pantun* in Sumatra's west coast and offshore island area:

<i>Festival Sikambang;</i>	<i>Festival Sikambang:</i>
<i>Berlayar hati tak senang</i>	Sail on with a heavy heart
<i>Air mata sepanjang laut</i>	My tears are as immense as the ocean

The loss of the people's *sikambang* heritage would indeed be an unmitigated cultural tragedy for the entire west coast and offshore Islander area unless they can sail on and restore their rightful place in the world as heirs to the great *sikambang* tradition.

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Appendix

Audio and Video Recordings

No.	Category	Name	Recording place and date
1	The Singing	<i>Buei</i>	i. Teluk Nibung (June 2010) ii. Haloban (Sept 2013) iii. Suka Makmur (Oct. 2014) iv. Suka Makmur (Oct. 2014)
		<i>Dikie Perempuan</i>	i. Haloban (July 2007) ii. Haloban (Oct. 2014)
		<i>Talibun</i>	i. Teluk Nibung (June 2010) ii. Suka Makmur (Oct. 2014)
2	The Singing and Instrument Combination	<i>Musik/lagu</i>	Haloban (July 2007)
		<i>Main</i>	Haloban (June 2010)
		<i>Rabana/Nasyid</i>	
		<i>Dikie Laki</i>	Haloban (July 2007)
		<i>Sikambang</i>	Haloban (Oct. 2014)
3	The Singing and Dancing Involvement	<i>Randai</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
4	The Singing, Dancing, and Instruments Mixing	<i>Adok</i>	i. Pulau Balai (June 2010) ii. Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
		<i>Bungkus</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
		<i>Pondok Batu</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
		<i>Anak Padang</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
		<i>Sampayan</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
		<i>Mak Inang</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)

	<i>Perak</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010, 2014)
	<i>Lelehusen</i>	Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
	<i>Pulau Pinang</i>	i. Teluk Nibung (June 2010) ii. Haloban (July 2007, June 2010)
	<i>Siantung</i>	Haloban (July 2007)
	<i>Sikambang</i>	Haloban (July 2007)
	<i>Yadoi</i>	Haloban (July 2007, Oct. 2014)
	<i>Bacarai Kasih</i>	Haloban (July 2007, Oct. 2014)
5.	The Dancing, Commanding and Instruments Mixture	<i>Langser</i> Haloban (June 2010, Oct. 2014)
	<i>Pedang</i>	Suka Makmur (Oct. 2014)
	<i>Gelombang</i> <i>Duabaleh</i>	Haloban (July 2007)