REGAL ORCHESTRA AND ITS TRANSFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA

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CULTURAL CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the transformation of Regal Orchestra through the concepts of glocalization, hybridity and other factors concerning both cultural and commercial factors. Regal Orchestra started as a classical Chinese ensemble which focused on Chinese popular music, then changed its focus to provide diverse music and commercial event management services. This qualitative research is mainly based on a naturalistic inquiry approach that includes observation, interviews, virtual fieldwork and analysis on performances. Findings reveal how the group was gradually branched into diverse musical bands including fusion band, live band, jazz band, all girls crystal band, Muhibbah music band; whereas drum groups such as Tang Ren Gu, Muhibbah drum and LED water drum due to commercial influence and market demand. Due to its business nature, performances are catered according to the client's musical taste where shidaiqu remains a favourite genre among the mid-aged and older Malaysian Chinese. Local demand of other ethnicities is answered through supplying Muhibbah drum and music performances which are by chance aligned with the 1Malaysia concept. As a summary, the study reviewed how Regal Orchestra and its changes reflect the change of tradition, political influence and as a commodity.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji transformasi Regal Orchestra melalui konsep-konsep glokalisasi, hibriditas dan faktor-faktor lain yang berkaitan dengan kedua-dua faktor budaya dan komersial. Regal Orchestra bermula sebagai ensemble Cina klasik yang memberi tumpuan kepada muzik popular Cina, kemudian mengubah fokusnya untuk mempersembahkan muzik yang pelbagai dan memberikan perkhidmatan pengurusan acara komersial. Penyelidikan kualitatif ini adalah terutamanya berdasarkan pendekatan inkuiri naturalistik yang merangkumi pemerhatian, temu bual, kerja lapangan maya dan analisis mengenai persembahan. Hasil penyelidikan mendedahkan bagaimana kumpulan ini secara beransur-ansur bercabang kepada band muzik yang pelbagai termasuk band gabungan, band live, band jazz, band kristal gadis, band muzik Muhibbah; manakala kumpulan gendang seperti Tang Ren Gu, gendang Muhibbah dan gendang air LED disebabkan oleh pengaruh komersil dan permintaan pasaran. Oleh kerana sifat perniagaannya, persembahan yang disediakan mengikut citarasa muzik pelanggan di mana lagu Mandarin oldies kekal sebagai genre kegemaran di kalangan kaum Cina Malaysia pertengahan umur dan lebih tua. Permintaan tempatan daripada kumpulan etnik yang lain dijawab dengan membekalkan gendang Muhibbah dan persembahan muzik yang secara kebetulan selaras dengan konsep 1 Malaysia. Sebagai ringkasan, kajian ini mengkaji bagaimana Regal Orchestra dan perubahannya yang mencerminkan perubahan tradisi, pengaruh politik dan sebagai komoditi.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Studies on Malaysian diasporic Chinese performing arts were conducted by several researchers (Carstens, 1999; Tan, 2000; Loo & Loo, 2012; Loo & Loo, 2012; 2014; 2016) emphasizing the Chinese identity among the multiracial nation. However, the Malaysian Chinese orchestra as one of Chinese musical art forms has received less attention from the scholars. Tan (2000) perhaps appeared to be the first ethnomusicologist who focused in this area of research since its inception in 1960s. Her article on *Huayue Tuan* or Chinese orchestra in Malaysia revealed the hardship of survival among local Chinese orchestras.

Most importantly, there is a trend among local Chinese orchestras such as Dama Asia Productions (previously known as Dama Orchestra), Professional Cultural Chinese Orchestra (PCCO), Vivo Experimental Orchestra (VEO) and Regal Orchestra eventually faced transformation to surviving the lack of reception in running a traditional Chinese orchestra. For example, Dama re-contextualized *shidaiqu* into musical theatrical production using only six members of musicians from its orchestra (see Loo & Loo, 2014), and Regal took on a contemporary and innovative crystal instrument ensemble. Thus, changes in these organizations are worthy of investigation as a cultural inquiry. As research on Dama Asia was done in most studies (Loo & Loo, 2012; Loo & Loo, 2012; 2014), this is the first study to research on Regal Orchestra.

Regal Orchestra is originally a local Chinese classical ensemble and in this research, the author attempted to examine its changes that involved a hybridity of elements, including modernity, westernization and political agenda such as 1Malaysia concept. Its origin, performances, events, repertoires, insiders, issues, functions, influences, cultural identities and the overall changes that took place for its sustainability were examined through ethnographic approach.

1.2 Background of Research

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2016), Malaysia's 31.7 million multi-ethnic populations revealed that there are 68.6% of *Bumiputeras* (sons of soil), 23.4% of Chinese, 7.0% of Indians and 1.0% of other ethnicities. Ethnic Malays which constitute the *Bumiputera* ethnic group predominating mostly in Peninsular Malaysia. Although Chinese in Malaysia is known as the second largest ethnic group, they are considered minorities due to barely making up a quarter of the citizens.

Chinese, despite being one of diasporic communities in Malaysia, are keen to preserve their identities in this nation through executing Chinese cultural activities and performing Chinese art forms. However, they obtained less concern and support from the Malaysian government. The inequality of ethnic Chinese's political stance and the lack of acknowledgment of their culture by the nation caused to an outbreak of racial riot that took place on 13th May 1969 (Ramli, Kamarunzaman & Ramli, 2013). This also involved the ethnic Malays who encountered imbalance economic development. Thus, conflicts occurred between these ethnic groups to express their frustrations. Although the government established the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 to target poverty issue and economy issue among the ethnic groups, a new national culture policy was executed during the 1970s by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports asserted that the national culture of Malaysia to only favour the culture of the Malays or the indigenous people, the incorporation of other cultures that are appropriate and Islam elements (Carstens, 1999; Tan, 1989). Hence, the diasporic population such as Chinese and Indians usually acquired funding from the private organizations for their cultural activities as the government subsidized particularly for the Western orchestra despite the acceptance of Chinese New Year and Deepavali as national holidays (Tan, 1989).

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Besides, the setting of threshold by the Malaysian government to only allow the public performances with government permits further restricted the cultural activities of other ethnic groups.

In Malaysia and Singapore, Chinese orchestra is known as *huayue tuan* (华乐团). It means the orchestra of the ethnic Chinese (Huang, 2009). However, distinguished names were given to this Chinese ensemble with accordance to varying geographical region. The national orchestra in Mainland China is called *minzu yuetuan* (民族乐团) or *minyue tuan* (民东团); in Hong Kong and Macau, it is named as *zhongyue tuan* (中乐团) whereas in Taiwan, it is *guoyue tuan* (国乐团) (Han & Gray, 1979; Huang, 2009; Tan, 2000). Thus, the name *huayue tuan* is adopted in this study as an appropriate term for referring to Malaysia's Chinese orchestra to prevent confusion.

Huayue tuan was originated from the modern Chinese orchestra in China which formed in 1935 with the Jiangnan Sizhu (江南丝竹) or 'Silk and Bamboo of the South' traditional ensemble served as a foundation (Han & Gray, 1979). Western ideas were firstly incorporated into the modern Chinese orchestra in 1942 by musicians. They were Western-trained and therefore greatly affected by Western intonation, tone color, harmony, scale, as well as the "improvement" of Chinese musical instruments (*Ibid.*). Hence, Western influence is one of the reasons that gave rise to this ensemble during the 1940s. Modernization was then taken place in terms of musical style, tonality, range and the size of orchestra due to the promotion of modern Chinese orchestra as a national music by the new government, the People's Republic, which established in 1949 and to cater the taste of the masses.

A modern Chinese orchestra is assigned according to Western format into four sections instead of the two-section traditional ensemble and all Western instruments are replaced by Chinese instruments (Han & Gray, 1979; Tan, 2000). They consist of the largest bowed string section [erhu (二胡, alto two-stringed fiddle), zhonghu (中胡, tenor two-stringed fiddle), gaohu (高胡, soprano two-stringed fiddle), gehu (革胡, bass fourstringed fiddle), banhu (板胡, wood-faced fiddle), beida gehu (倍大革胡, double-bass four-stringed fiddle), cello and double bass], the plucked strings [guzheng (古筝, zither with movable bridges), ruan (阮, four-stringed round-shaped lute), yangqin (扬琴, hammered dukimer), *pipa* (琵琶, pear-shaped plucked lute), *yueqin* (月琴, shortnecked plucked lute), liugin (柳琴, pear-shaped high-pitched plucked lute), sanxian (三 弦, three-stringed long-necked lute)], winds [dizi (笛子, transverse flute), xiao (箫, vertical flute), sheng (笙, free-reed mouth organ), suona (唢呐, double-reed conical pipe)] and percussion [drum, bo (钹, cymbal), luo (锣, gong), shimian luo (十面锣, ten small tuned gongs), ling (铃, bells), maling (马铃, sleigh bells), shuangyin mu (双音木, two-tone woodblock), bangzi (梆子, wooden clappers), muyu (木鱼, woodblock)] (Tan, 2000). Furthermore, the employment of an orchestra conductor and the specific layout of a huayue tuan were evidence of Western influence.

During late 1800s in Malaysia, the diasporic Chinese used to perform 'regional music' (*difang yinyue*, 地方音乐) where they improvised the opera and folk tunes in Hokkien, Cantonese and Teochew without using scores and conductor (Tan, 2000). All the cultural activities such as musical ensemble, opera, lion dance, martial arts and so forth were organized by regional societies and clan associations. The expansion of musical ensembles, scheduled musical practices and the establishment of standard performances were then aroused since the 1930s. A few decades later in the 1960s, *huayue tuan* was named along with the addition of new improved musical instruments, musical scores, tapes and recordings brought back from China and Hong Kong by

Chinese Malaysian musicians (*Ibid.*). Since then, several *huayue tuan* were born – the Alor Star' Dejiao Hui in 1964, the Jit Sin Secondary School Chinese Musical Instrument Society in 1968 and the Penang Philharmonic Society in 1971.

Importantly, *Huayue tuan* was formed in the old days not solely for entertainment purpose, but also to foster healthy culture or *jiankang wenhua* (健康文化) as opposed to the yellow culture or *huangse wenhua* (黄色文化), Chinese culture, the relationship between members and to obtain funding for buildings, charity and poor children (Tan, 2000). As members consisted mainly amateurs who do not take music playing as their priority, namely the working class people and students, *huayue tuan* encountered a shortage of musicians and conductors. The prevailing pop music and Cantonese movies on mass media further pushed back the possibility for the younger generation to promote this Chinese culture.

Chinese performing arts in Malaysia like *huayue tuan* was able to survive due to its role play in social function, the awareness of ethnic identity especially after the execution of 1971's New Economic Policy and the unity of different cultural organizations (Tan, 2000). *Huayue tuan* initially confined to only Mandarin-speaking Chinese community including its Chinese performers and audience took a sharp turn through assimilation of Malay and Indian musical elements in their performance.

In the 1990s when the conflict of national culture had reduced, the government allowed more freedom on the usage of non-Malay language, education and more involvement of multi-ethnic cultural activities in the public and on mass media (Tan, 2002). The rising number of middle class English-educated Chinese with liberal views had prompted the revival of Chinese tradition that encouraged the development of Chinese music education. Many young people took initiative to learn Chinese musical instruments as more Chinese orchestral concerts were organized by China's professional musicians in Malaysia.

Various measures are taken to advocate and preserve the Chinese performing arts in Malaysia. One most vital step is to upgrade the standard of performance to cater a wider and more diverse audience (Tan, 2002). Among the more prominent Chinese orchestra, for instance, Dama Asia Productions (大马音乐剧团, formerly known as Dama Orchestra) which formed in 1994 and the Penang State Chinese Orchestra (PESCO) that initiated in 1998 have applied professionalism in their performance in terms of their polished playing techniques, challenging and diversified compositions, specially designed costumes, formal and decorated context, pre-planned program and great publicity as compared to other amateur cultural groups (*Ibid.*). Other ways also comprised of music centre's set-up, initiation of examinations and participation in competitions.

In Malaysia, there were quite a number of Chinese orchestras being established over the past century. Majority of them have been performed in a larger group such as the Selangor's Professional Cultural Centre Orchestra (PCCO, 专艺民族乐团) that formed in 1989, the Penang's ProArt Chinese Orchestra (PACO, 艺演华乐团, formerly known as Northern Malaysia Chinese Orchestra, 北马华乐团) which founded in 1998 and Chinese orchestras in primary and secondary schools. Regal Orchestra (艺展华乐演艺 团) is one of the minorities that commonly performed in small-scale ensembles and commercial settings.

Regal Orchestra is a diversified Chinese ensemble music business organization. It is regarded as an event management service provider that supplies musical live bands and drum group performances mainly based on traditional Chinese instruments (http://www.regalorchestra.com/). The company is founded by Alan Lam Kee Leong (蓝启伦) who specializes in *guzheng* with more than 30 years of playing experience and on the recommendation of Dato' Jennifer Low, an important benefactor of Lam, in 2003. In fact, he firstly established KeeJan Enterprise (艺展音乐艺术公司) as a music centre in year 2000 which was then changed to KeeJan Music School (艺展音乐学院) a year later. Currently, he holds the positon as the president of Malaysia Traditional Musical Instrument Association (MTMIA) (马来西亚民族器乐总会) and also entitled as the champion in Malaysia's Chinese Music Solo Competition in 1990 and 1991.

Multiple music bands and drum groups were formed within the organization to cater for wide-ranging audience rather than targeting solely on Chinese community. Apart from specializing in Chinese instruments comprising *guzheng*, *dizi*, *erhu*, *zhongruan* (middle-range long-necked lute), *yangqin*, *sheng*, *pipa*, percussion and so forth, a vast variety of Western instruments were being used, such as piano, electric guitar, synthesizers, harmonica, accordion, saxophone, xylophone, organ, clarinet and electronic drums. Thus, all the bands and groups to date can be classified into Classical Chinese Ensemble, Fusion Band, Live Band, Jazz Band, *Tang Ren Gu* Drum Group (唐 人鼓), Muhibbah Band and Drum Group, LED Water Drum and All Girls Crystal Band.

Interestingly, a number of imported Chinese instruments were amalgamated with modern elements such as the acrylic-made crystal instruments (i.e. *dizi*, *erhu*, *pipa*, *zhongruan* and *guzheng*) and LED water drums. Malaysian multicultural elements and a few instruments from different ethnic groups were also incorporated in their performances, for example, Indian's *tabla* and *bansuri*; Malay's *gong* and *kompang*. This associated with the launching of 1Malaysia ideology (http://www.1malaysia.com.my/) in 2008 by our prime minister, Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak with the "Muhibbah" concept which means tolerance (Loo & Loo, 2016). Thus,

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the acceptance of the 1Malaysia ideology in a formerly single-ethnic ensemble and the employment of various concepts prompted the question of whether its changes were associated with its survival issue among the many other traditional art genres in this multiracial country.

In addition, their performances adopted hybrid musical genres such as classical orchestral pieces, Chinese folk music, Chinese golden oldies or *shidaiqu*, Mandarin popular music, Cantonese popular music, Hokkien popular music, English popular music, Malay songs, Indian songs and so forth. *Shidaiqu* (时代曲, song of the times) is a modern popular music genre that was created between the 1920s and 1950s which known as *laoge* (老歌) or *jiuqu* (旧曲, old song) in Malaysia, whereas it is called *guoyu laoge* (国语老歌, Mandarin Chinese old song) in Taiwan (Loo & Loo, 2014). Its popular nature that stemmed from the fusion of West and Chinese music became the root of Mandopop, Cantopop and today's Chinese popular music. As many Chinese songs performed comprising of *shidaiqu* and Mandopop, this raised the question of whether these "Chinese golden oldies" were being revived in Chinese orchestra apart from the common occasions for the revival of *shidaiqu* such as nightclubs, *ko-tai* (歌台), the Hungry Ghost Festival, *Diaohua Chang* (吊花场), private functions and so forth.

Furthermore, Regal Orchestra mainly performed for corporate events, private functions, festivals and celebrations, for instance during Chinese New Year, wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, company annual dinners, shopping malls, hotel ballrooms, exhibitions, restaurants and so forth. There was a doubt whether the choice of performing in commercial settings as compared to the concert settings of conventional Chinese orchestra was in fact to cope with the financial issue that was also commonly encountered by other Chinese performing arts in Malaysia. Performance usually staged in a small ensemble group of less than ten people but solo performance could also be seen occasionally. In general, performers were dressed according to the theme of the events or the request of client, for instance, red traditional Chinese costumes are used during Chinese weddings and Chinese New Year events, colorful traditional Indian costumes for Diwali events and white fairy costumes for Western fairy-themed event. On the one hand, Regal Orchestra commonly allowed customization according to customer preferences where they could select the song, singer, type of band, number of musician and musical genre. Its vast transformation from the field of music education to popular and commercial nature as well as diverse Chinese-related performance group was to satisfy every needs of the customer regardless of race. Hence, this probed the question to its function as a diasporic Chinese cultural activity in this multi-ethnic country.

1.3 Justification of Research

It was found that substantial studies had been done on Malaysian indigenous or traditional music. However, less research was conducted on Chinese performing arts particularly on Malaysian Chinese orchestra. The first and foremost detailed study on this research area was written by Tan Sooi Beng in the year of 2000. As there was a trend of transformation among the local Chinese orchestras throughout the past decades such as Dama Asia and Regal Orchestra, documentation on their cultural change is needed. This research investigated and focused only on Regal Orchestra since the study on Dama Asia had been previously done by other researchers (Loo & Loo, 2012; Loo & Loo, 2012; 2014). Moreover, it intends to add another level of knowledge to the research field of Chinese performing arts in Malaysia by looking into the similarities and differences between these Chinese orchestras in their transformation and impacts on multi-ethnic cultural activity in Malaysia. Furthermore, there has not been much research focused on the Malaysian Chinese performing arts with commercial nature to

date (Loo & Loo, 2012; Loo & Loo, 2012; Loo, 2014; Loo & Loo, 2016). Hence, the study of this commercialized Chinese ensemble, Regal Orchestra, is to fill in the gap of the research in Malaysia's diasporic Chinese performing arts.

The relationship between music and culture of this ensemble was concerned, along with the issues encountered by the group or the performers, its influences and the reception of audience that might be the reason for a change of trend in Chinese orchestra performance. In addition, documentation of Regal Orchestra's performance and analysis of its compositions that made up of hybrid elements, Malaysian theme and Chinese golden oldies were also worth the study.

1.4 Problem Statement

Several problem statements were discussed in this research. First, it was regarding the transformation of Regal Orchestra in a contemporary society. Questions on how this particular Chinese orchestra survived and transformed as well as what the deciding factors in its transformation were yet to be answered. Thus, the reason that influenced Regal Orchestra to form diverse performance groups was to be studied and analysed. In addition, its impacts of transformation were also yet to be understood; the use of repertoires such as numerous selections of song and genres in different musical bands and drum groups were yet to be compiled; and the question of why a particular musical genre was popular in the group was also a concern. Moreover, the issues and challenges that encountered by Regal Orchestra, its function and cultural identities in this multicultural nation were yet to be figured out. Hence, this research studied and examined the problems that were faced by Regal Orchestra and the cultural roles that had been taken by this group that were different from other conventional Chinese orchestra in Malaysia.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This study was solely based on the qualitative research on the formation of Regal Orchestra, the influences that caused its transformation and development, the issues faced, organization structures, performances including the most celebrated songs that were performed, its functions and cultural identities. Furthermore, data collection in ethnographic study requires an observation period to participate as an insider, to conduct interview and to document the data from fieldwork (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The understanding of research subjects was firstly done through internet and detailed data regarding Regal Orchestra was collected through visiting its founder or director, musicians and members. Several performances were watched and the reception of audience was also observed. Extensive interviews, observations and virtual fieldwork were conducted over the course of this study. In addition, this research design was based on ethnography which focused on the informants' experiences apart from analysing the performances. According to Blacking (1977), there were differences where minor variations in the style of music and innovative variations resulted from social, economic or political change as compared to the significant change in the sound of music which only denoted as musical change. Hence, the transformation of Regal Orchestra and its diverse musical styles are musical consequences of other changes.

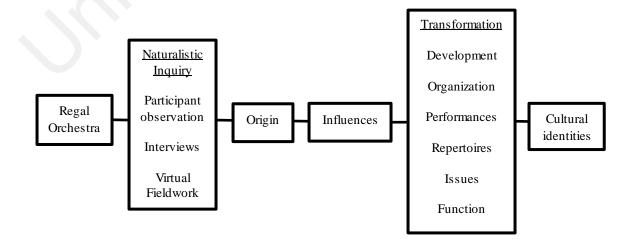


Figure 1.1: Conceptual diagram of research

1.6 Research Objectives

This study comprised of three research objectives that look into the changes in Regal Orchestra, they are:

- 1. To investigate the transformation of Regal Orchestra from a Chinese classical ensemble to diverse musical bands and drum groups.
- 2. To analyse Regal Orchestra performances and its repertoires.
- 3. To discuss Regal Orchestra's transformation and its cultural identities.

The research objectives were obtained from reviewing literature related to the subject matter and sufficient understandings on the topic. The first objective is the main concern of this study to examine the change of Regal Orchestra through investigating its origin, development, organization, musical bands and groups. Differences between conventional Chinese orchestra in Malaysia and Regal Orchestra are mentioned. Next, the second research objective is to document and analyse the performances and repertoires used in different musical bands and groups of Regal Orchestra. Shidaiqu which constituted the most popular genre in the group was tabled and discussed along with other repertoires. Numerous combinations of bands and groups were also compiled and listed. Besides, the audience's reception and musicians' experiences were looked into to understand the perception of insiders. Finally, the last objective of study is to discover the influences that transformed Regal Orchestra and its cultural identities. Issues that encountered by the group and the change of function due to its transformation were also investigated. The employment of primary and secondary resources helped to achieve the above research objectives.

1.7 Research Questions

Research questions and sub-questions served as a guide to fieldwork observation and interview of the study which listed in the following:

- 1. What was the formation and development of Regal Orchestra?
 - a. How Regal Orchestra was formed and developed?
 - b. Who constituted the organization?
 - c. What types of events Regal Orchestra performed?
 - d. Where were the venues of performance?
 - e. Who were the client, customer and audience?
 - f. How Regal Orchestra catered to its client, customer and audience?
 - g. What is the function of Regal Orchestra?
 - h. Why diverse performances were formed in Regal Orchestra?
 - i. What were the problems encountered by Regal Orchestra and their solutions?
- 2. What has significantly transformed in Regal Orchestra performances?
 - a. What were the repertoires that performed and the most popular ones?
 - b. How were the repertoires, musical instruments and number of performers being selected?
 - c. Who are the performers in every band and drum group?
 - d. How was the reception of audience towards the performance?
- 3. What were the transformation of Regal Orchestra and its cultural identities?
 - a. What were the changes that occurred in Regal Orchestra?
 - b. What were the reasons that caused the transformation of Regal Orchestra?

c. What were the cultural identities of Regal Orchestra that related to its transformation?

1.8 Limitation of Study

Research was conducted and focused on the case study of Regal Orchestra in Malaysia from year 2016 to 2017 as a partial requirement of a mix-mode master's degree dissertation. As this study was focused on the transformation of Regal Orchestra since its inception, information such as its origin and performances of the past can only be traced back through virtual fieldwork, current interviews and available recordings. Thus, limited sources were obtained to validate the data from the past. Besides, there were several performances out of numerous diverse performances which only permitted and chosen by the director of Regal Orchestra for observation and data collection. This was mainly due to the commercial nature of these performances that restricted the access of outsiders into their private settings, for example, a corporate event in a hotel ballroom or a birthday function in a reserved restaurant, as respecting the customer's privacy is one of the responsibilities of the business owner.

Furthermore, there were only a few veteran musicians being picked by the director of Regal Orchestra to be interviewed by the researcher as all musicians of Regal Orchestra are freelances. Audience was being observed rather than being asked questions as they were enjoying their meals and performances in the functions. This was to avoid interruptions that might have caused discomfort to the customer and audience. In addition, due to business nature of this orchestra, commercial confidentiality was the top concern of the owner. For instance, the rate of performances, song lists and other private information were not able to be revealed to the researcher. Therefore, this research depended vastly on virtual fieldwork as compared to the conducting of interviews.

1.9 Organization of Study

This study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction that presented the historical background of Chinese orchestra in China and in Malaysia, followed by Literature Review in Chapter two that reviewed all the scholarly literatures in the field of ethnomusicology, the topic of Chinese popular music and Malaysian Chinese performing arts. Next, the Methodology in Chapter three discussed several research approaches used in pre-fieldwork, field-work and post-fieldwork. Then, data collected was analysed to obtain results in Chapter four. Lastly, the study discussed all the findings obtained and provided conclusion in Chapter five.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literatures of scholars from the field of ethnomusicology, Malaysian Chinese performing arts, commercialized Chinese orchestra and Chinese popular music were reviewed and discussed in this chapter. The theories, concepts, issues, functions and definitions were evaluated to find the gap of literature research.

2.2 Ethnomusicology

Definitions of the term "ethnomusicology" had been argued substantially by scholars (Merriam, 1977; Nettl, 1980, 2005; Rice, 2014) of this field for many decades but none of them perfectly fitted its description. Nettl (1980) and (2005) stated the predecessor's terms from *Musikologie* in 1880s, to "comparative musicology," later to "ethnomusicology" during 1950s and lastly to the hyphen-removing "ethnomusicology" in 1955. Adler (1885) and Haydon (1941) proposed the earliest definition of "comparative musicology" as the folk music study, while the term "non-Western" or music that is orally transmitted was preferred by Nettl (1965). However, objections were given to the term "comparative" by Hood (1957), Meyer (1960) and Blacking (1966) as music is incomparable before the new term of "ethnomusicology" was formed.

Ethnomusicologists such as Nettl (1985) and Everett and Lau (2004) researched regarding the formation and development of cross-cultural music synthesis around the world where the East met with West or when the West encountered with East. Nettl (1985)'s focal point was regarding the influence of Western music that shaped the global indigenous musical culture. He defined both terms of Westernization and modernization as the process of Western elements being incorporated into non-Western culture. Nevertheless, Westernization involved the tradition to be part of the West; while modernization was perceived as a method to continue the tradition instead of

transforming it. On the other hand, clear distinction and normative usage between the labels of traditional and modern; old and new on a particular musical genre were criticized by Everett and Lau (2004) who highlighted the ambiguity, fluid and complex nature of the cross-cultural musical process due to musical interaction between different cultures.

Besides, Blacking (1981) and Cohen (1993) showed there were increasing numbers of ethnomusicologists who had shifted their attention to study "popular"; "commercial"; "urban" music as compared to "folk" or "traditional" music. General concerns were claimed to be given to non-western musical genre, their revival or declination due to social change, music of small communities or related to urban migration by Cohen (1993). Nonetheless, Blacking (1981) argued that popular music should be reckoned as "a category of value that can be applied to all styles of music" (p. 13) as long as the public loves it and not to label it as unrefined. Researcher stressed on the needs to eliminate bias towards the different classes of "art," "folk" and "popular" music, just as the inevitable existence, but distinct roles between the composer, performer and listener that made up the whole music-making process since music is no doubt a social fact.

The confusion that frequently made by many music researchers was associated with the study of musical change as Nettl (1964) and Blacking (1977) emphasized. Blacking (1977) provided a clear distinction between the changes of musical systems and the innovations within a musical system that resulted from social, cultural, economic or political change and so forth. Importantly, neither the accumulation of any new musical styles due to social influence nor without a radical change of musical system could be deemed as musical acculturation. Furthermore, Nettl (1964) added that the factor of musical change is not due to "contact among people and cultures" or "movement of populations" (p. 232). In fact, it is based on each individual's decision-making that affected by its experience, its attitude towards society and its intentionality in musical expression.

Turner (1993) had suggested the two contrasting cultural concepts advocating multiculturalism – one who stressed on the differences and boundaries of culture while the other one who stood for cultural hybridization and the liberty of cultural expression. On the other hand, Carstens (1999) stated the global impacts along with the immerging of new technologies in this mass-mediated era enhanced and strengthened the national cultures. This can be seen especially among the diaspora population such as the Chinese and Indians in Malaysia where they quickly adapted themselves according to the local situation which led to the diversity of local culture. The prevalence of VCR technology and Hong Kong movies in the 1980s also became the noticeable impact of mass media on Chinese Malaysian culture.

This research was regarded as an ethnographic study, with its origin in the 1800s where the first data collection was about the non-European people. Studies such as Blacking (1981), Cohen (1993) and Thompson (2014) revealed the available methodologies for this type of research. Thompson (2014) stated that it usually involved a qualitative research examining the complex cultural aspects of certain people. It also adopted data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews and surveys to investigate the reasons, factors or the intentions of music-making that considered to be significant in the ethnomusicological study (Blacking, 1981). Cohen (1993) determined that ethnographic research requires direct observation of the behaviour of a certain community, their rehearsals, performances, interactions, social networks and so forth. It is a research approach to study "other" cultures or to see familiar contexts from another perspective. Besides, thr researchers also reminded regarding the importance of knowing the local language in order to carry out in-depth research in a small-scale society.

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2.3 Chinese Performing Arts in Malaysia

Malaysia as one of the multi-ethnic Southeast Asia nations formed its Chinese culture from the outside influences of the neighbouring and remote countries especially from China. However, many local Chinese performing arts struggled to sustain and survive in this country. Hence, they underwent various changes through adaption by utilizing the concepts of modernization, Westernization, globalization and localization since the mass-mediated era. Although Chinese composed of approximately a quarter of the Malaysian population, which is also the second largest ethnic group, it had been pointed out (Miller & Williams, 2008) that little research and documentation regarding Malaysian Chinese performing arts was available. Thus, among the most significant researchers who contributed to this subject area were Tan Sooi Beng, Loo Fung Ying and Loo Fung Chiat. A number of important studies on different types of Malaysian Chinese art forms had been found in Tan (1981; 1984, 1989-1990; 2000; 2007), Loo and Loo (2012a; 2012b; 2014; 2016), Matusky and Tan (2004), Miller and Williams (2008), Lee, Loo and Zaharul (2015) and so forth.

Among the studies of Malaysian performing arts, Matusky and Tan (2004) compiled the most comprehensive collection of major musical genres that found in this nation. Researchers provided the historical overview and analysis of a few Chinese musical art forms, for example, Chinese orchestra, Chinese opera, lion dance and 24 seasons drum, although to a lesser degree than the Malaysian performing arts of other ethnicities. On the other hand, Miller and Williams (2008) had given their brief insights on Malaysian Chinese music and theatre art forms, while comparing between various performing arts of the Southeast Asian countries.

Chinese orchestra is a commonly practiced traditional Chinese music ensemble in Malaysia including the Chinese schools. However, research on this subject area in this nation is considerably limited as compared to the resources of other countries. Tan (2000) shared detailed information regarding *huayue tuan* (Malaysian Chinese orchestra) particularly in Penang such as the Penang State Chinese Orchestra (PESCO) which was up to year 2000. Loo and Loo (2012a; 2012b; 2014) were then further contributed by investigating into the transformation of Dama Asia, which was once a classical Chinese orchestral group that transformed into a *shidaiqu* (literally means song of the times, 时代曲) theatrical production. Researchers mainly described the development, productions, function and issues encountered, for instance, the most crucial survival issue of *huayue tuan* that gave rise to its cultural adaptation and transformation, while briefly introduced about the modern Chinese orchestra that originated from China. Moreover, clear insights were illustrated due to the employment of participant observation by researchers.

Malaysian Chinese contemporary musical theatre is another emerging art form in contemporary Malaysia due to the tide of globalization, modernization, local demands and popular culture (Loo & Loo, 2012b; 2014; Loo & Toon, 2015). This was exemplified through the case of Dama Asia to fit the current consumer trend in order to promote its diasporic Chinese culture nationally and globally. Researchers emphasized the reasons and needs of utilizing the concept of hybridity that fused between the East and the West such as re-contextualized Shanghai's *shidaiqu* into a Westernized elite theatrical form as a mean of recreating a serious art form that belonged to the Malaysian Chinese community. On the other hand, Loo and Loo (2012a) had also reviewed another Chinese musical production which known as Musical on Stage Production (MOSP), a Buddhist-centred production. The group changed its direction to produce popular Chinese music once in a while after a decade, while both its founder and music composer further joined in the other production that implemented the 1Malaysia theme.

Apart from Chinese orchestra, Malaysian Chinese possesses a theatrical art form which known as the glove puppet theatre (*po te hi*). However, it was considered as a lowly folk form which encountered extinction due to the nation's ignorance and it also displayed a lower status than the Chinese orchestra as according to Tan (1981); while Anderson (1977) called the puppet theatre as a smaller and cheaper version of the opera. He mentioned that Westernized Chinese showed curiosity and nostalgic towards the Chinese traditional art forms instead of being interested in them (*Ibid.*). Hence, a stressed community such as the Chinese minority is inclined to exercise adaptation by choosing particular characteristics of its tradition to survive the changing conditions and outside forces.

Tan (1984)'s research on the famous *Ko-tai* (*getai*, literally means song stage, 歌台) in Penang that appealed to large crowds during the religious festivals, such as the Hungry Ghost Festival, was mainly credited to its funny and relevant comic sketches as compared to its popular singing performance. This Chinese urban street theatre appeared when the opera and puppet theatre received less attention from the young Chinese people. On the other hand, *Diaohua Chang* (literally means place of hanging flower, 吊花场) has its usual setting in the food court, pub or nightclub (Chin, 2015). Both Chinese performing arts often staged and served as an entertainment and perhaps, for the revival of *shidaiqu* to cater to the taste of its Chinese community.

24 Seasons Drum (*Ershisi Jieling Gu*, 二十四节令鼓) is considered as one of the most well-known Malaysian Chinese heritages. This Chinese percussion ensemble is popularly performed among the Malaysian Chinese community, especially in Chinese schools and during Chinese New Year festival (Chan, 2009). Studies such as Chan (2002) and Lee, Loo and Zaharul (2015) introduced the historical formation of 24 Seasons Drum that started in Johor, its founder, the instrumentation used, striking

techniques, team-building, its original concept which based on China's traditional agricultural activity throughout the four seasons and the choreographed drum performance that had incorporated a few Chinese elements. In addition, Lee et al. (2015) also highlighted the use of Western notation rather than Chinese cipher notation during the training sessions.

As 24 Seasons Drum gained popularity around the world and performed by many other troupes globally, new creative modern elements were added into the drum performance to capture the attention of the 21st century audiences. In Malaysia, this was explained in the studies of Chan (2006) and Jotsna (2015) by taking Hands Percussion Malaysia (HANDS) as an example to exemplify the transformation of a single-ethnic *shigu* (lion drum) ensemble into a world-class fusion multi-cultural percussion ensemble to sustain and survive its self-funded group. Invention and integration of hybridized theatrical drumming style, the addition of instrumentations of other cultures, innovation of new compositions that adopted drumming patterns from the Malay's Gamelan and Indian's tabla were all stemmed from a search for Chinese identity in this multi-ethnic country (*Ibid.*).

Chinese people in Malaysia are eagerly seeking for cultural inclusion by their own country and their identity as a Malaysian. This was seen in the national cultural debates of the 1980s, which proposed the recognition of Chinese lion dance as part of the Malaysian national culture as one of the three main issues undergone by Malaysian Chinese (Carstens, 1999). Tan (2007) and Loo and Loo (2016) investigated the origin and evolution of this Malaysian traditional Chinese dance art form that accompanied by the *shigu*. Furthermore, various changes had taken place for its sustainability to withstand extinction (Chan, 2009). The lion dance today is participated globally during events and competitions. It is publicly seen at shopping malls, hotels and restaurants, although it was once a folk practice that performed on the streets and confined only to

Chinese. Thus, in Malaysia, this Chinese diasporic practice has to be innovative enough to safeguard its position as a national art of this multiracial country and to stand out among other traditional performing arts. Examples presented by Loo & Loo (2016) were including the merging between the northern and southern lion styles, the introducing of World Lion Dance Championship and the adopting of multiculturalism in Kun Seng Keng Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe (KSK). Besides, the launching of 1Malaysia political concept by the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak, was also to attract participation of different ethnic groups of the nation.

Studies such as Tan (1989-1990) and Tan, Thock, Ngah and Ramli (2012) had outlined several crucial roles of Chinese associations in order to support, sustain and propagate Chinese culture in different states. The former studied on the Penang Chinese Martial Arts Association which formed by members of lion and dragon dance troupes; whereas the latter research composed of seven Chinese associations in Kuala Terengganu in which the Chinese only constituted approximately 2% of population in this predominantly Malay state (*Ibid.*). In these states, Chinese associations strived to organize a number of Chinese cultural activities including Chinese orchestra practices despite of their limited financial resources, lack of governmental support and less attention given by the young generation. As a matter of fact, the researchers claimed that the identity of an ethnic group was greatly relying on its culture where if "without a distinct identity, an ethnic group will cease to exist as a collective and cohesive entity" (Tan et al., 2012, p. 442). Hence, the Chinese cultural organizations and associations even had gone as far as to protest against those who intended to deform any aspect of their traditions.

"While it is true that Chinese identity is not fixed and is constantly being transformed, the Chinese in diaspora still share certain common features of cultural identity which have been brought by their ancestors from China" (Tan, 2007, p. 74). The minority such as the Malaysian Chinese who carried some forms of China's tradition by their ancestors needed to continuously recreate their cultural forms by adapting and negotiating among other ethnicities as to protect, maintain and to strive for survival in this dominant society. Therefore, authenticity is not specifically mattered in the transformation and for the continuity of a tradition where Tan (2007) identified it as the shifting identities of the Chinese in diaspora.

2.4 Commercialized Chinese Orchestras

The "tradition" in which the Chinese orchestra is recognized as one of traditional Chinese performing arts in Malaysia has constantly encountered changing and transforming along with time. Researcher found that the literature studies on Malaysian Chinese orchestra were quite rare whether regarding the conventional or the contemporary one, in comparison with Chinese orchestra research done by other countries such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Many studies were conducted on the modern Chinese orchestra in China such as Han and Gray (1979), Brace (1992), Tsao (1998), Moore & Ewell (2010) and so forth. On the other hand, the most prominent Malaysian studies had been written by scholars such as Tan Sooi Beng and Loo Fung Ying. Hence, this study tended to fill in the gap of this research field.

Studies of Tan (2000), Chew (2013), Loo (2012a; 2012b; 2014) and Lei (2015) were investigated on Chinese orchestras in Malaysia and they served as the research background for this study. Nevertheless, different focus points were delivered by each study. Tan (2000) emphasized on the traditional and conventional *huayue tuan* from the 1960s to the year of 2000. Researcher informed regarding how the Chinese orchestras in Malaysia were brought over from China, then adapted and transformed through localization to continue survive and eventually emerged as a component of voluntary organizations. In Chew (2013), there were four Malaysian Chinese orchestras from different secondary schools being analysed in relation to their performance practice on the educational setting. On the contrary, Loo (2012a; 2012b; 2014) inspected the continuity of Dama Asia as contemporary Malaysian Chinese orchestra and discovered a change in the traditional Malaysian Chinese orchestra to different context, performance setting and function. DA MA ensemble and the Penang State Chinese Orchestra (PESCO) had been used as examples to demonstrate their professionalism through innovative compositions combining the Malaysian theme and Western elements. Besides, Lei (2015) highlighted various common issues encountered by most of the Chinese orchestras in Malaysia and the solutions were shared. One way was to reduce the stereotypical style of traditional Chinese music by absorbing and incorporating all kinds of new elements. Perhaps, this represents a trend of transformation among the local groups which moving towards popular and commercial settings to provide entertainment and business-related ceremonies as exemplified by other art form such as lion dance.

As Miller and Williams (2008) stated that since the 20th century, Western influence had been the major factor for the modernization of the "ancient" and "oriental" non-Western music where there were different challenges being faced by the traditional music were distinguished. Researchers such as Tan (2000) and Loo (2012b; 2014) explained that music played in concert settings can actually confront changes such as undergone modernization and survived extinction. As music associated with functions, traditional rituals and festivals were vulnerable and had passed off eventually, modernization then took place to prevent from extinction (Jameson, 1985; Miller and Williams, 2008). Modernized musical performances catered to whatever the audience wished to see such as a short-length, diverse and visually attractive show instead of a long-hour and full-of-texts serious performance. This was also disclosed by Chan (2006) that the audience of 21st century preferred performance with the features of short, bizarre and visually attractive. Thus, Jameson (1985) emphasized the inevitable trend of visual culture in the entertainment industry to serve for the culture of consumerism. Moreover, innovation and the capability of predicting the consumer trend are highly important to raise attraction and popularity. Hence, "Prosperity and modernization do not necessarily degrade traditional musics, but poverty tends to preserve old ways by limiting options" (Miller & Williams, 2008, p. 66).

Apart from Westernization, modernization and professionalization which caused the traditional Chinese music to experience great transformations since the 20th century, Yang and Saffle (2010) proclaimed that started the next century, from year 2001, commercialization, commodification and globalization became increasingly significant. Furthermore, Lemos (2011) showed a link of relationship between the issues of gender, music and globalization. Differences between the two main modes of globalization's production: "globalized localism" and "localized globalism" were also stressed by the researcher. The former means the globalization of particular genres of music; the latter implies local adaptation to resist globalized localism. As Yang & Saffle (2010) declared that subservient culture needed to conform according to dominant aesthetic preference in order to sell their products in dominant market, this is not unusual to see feminised sexual performance as a global phenomenon nowadays. Stokes (2004) referred this dominant market force as the Western music due to the norm of recognizing it as higher status than World music including Chinese music.

Many Chinese orchestras in Chinese-populated countries are inclined to shift away from the conventional style to become popular although they have received tremendous criticism for their innovations. In China, the first formation of all-female fusion Chinese instrumental music ensemble – the 12 Girls Band (*Nuzi shier yuefang*, 女子十二乐坊) (Jing, 2010; Yang & Saffle, 2010) is an example of a forward-looking commercialized Chinese orchestra. *Wang Xiaojing* commodified and successfully promoted Chinese instrumental music to international pop-music market through syncretism – the blending

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of Western elements into Chinese instrumental playing (e.g., standing rather than conventional seating pose, bass and drum, rhythm tracks). Another example of the popularized Chinese girl band is exemplified by the sexually explicit 10-girl ensemble in Taiwan, Musou Band (Huang, 2009). The band intended to challenge and to break the Chinese music tradition for the purpose to enter into the mainstream of music through popular culture. Apart from the sexy mini-*cheongsam* costume, the composer of the band targeted at young consumers specifically for those video gamers by producing techno, pop, alternative, dance music and computerized beats which similar to video game music.

In Taiwan, contemporary Chinese music became the mainstream in traditional Chinese music performing art. Several traditional Chinese orchestras, particularly the National Chinese Orchestra (NCO) incorporated significant concepts: globalization, deterritorialization, hegemony, westernization and indigenization in order to commercialize and popularize their groups (Su, 2014). Four feasible methods adopted by these Chinese musical ensembles to conduct creative performances were concluded as innovative arrangement and composition, creative performance style, cross-cultural musical interaction and collaboration of different performing arts. Besides, as consumer culture cultivated and encouraged commercialized cultural consumption, the increased demand for cultural commodity had caused to the popularization of a particular cultural art form (Lury, 1996; Slater, 1997; Featherstone, 2007; Prasidh Raj Singh, 2011). Therefore, those who possessed cultural capital (e.g., artist, musician and performer) were then innovated as a reaction towards cultural popularization. Su (2014) highlighted the fact of adding new performing elements was not much associated with the losing of traditional music aesthetics. On the contrary, this relied on the intention of musician itself whether or not to inherit its own Chinese culture to preserve the traditional Chinese music aesthetics. Traditional Chinese music was regarded as a signifier of an

art form which signified its social function, entertainment purpose and preservation of tradition (Saussure, 2011). It was the trend in contemporary society that impacted and transformed traditional Chinese orchestra instead of acknowledged it as "adding" new elements (Su, 2014). Furthermore, researcher also emphasized the balance between innovation and tradition apart from remembering the core value of the art form.

In addition, the ideology of localization was also adopted in a multi-ethnic country such as Singapore apart from Malaysia. Chinese orchestra in Singapore is generally termed as CO among the younger generation. Although Malay and Indian are minorities in this nation, multi-cultural Chinese orchestral works that collaborated with Indian and Malay music were staged (Wong, 2009). This was due to the nation governmental policy that emphasized on promoting racial harmony and the exchange of culture among ethnic groups. Thus, Chinese orchestras were utilized as representative of the Chinese cultural art form in Singapore (*ibid.*). Apart from that, Ho (2016) stated that innovation and the addition of new compositions, arrangements, musical styles, musical themes, chamber music and the collaboration with other musical groups had been demonstrated by the contemporary Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO). Moreover, as the use of music technology is prevalent for music productions in this modern era, the orchestra have also produced CDs and DVDs of diverse Chinese music, including *shidaiqu*, folk songs, orchestral music, children's music, fusion music and so forth for the public.

2.5 Chinese Popular Music

Chinese popular music studies were examined due to the vast amount of Chinese popular songs being performed by the commercialized Chinese orchestra such as Dama Asia and Regal Orchestra. Both Chen (2005) and Jones (2001) described the genre of *shidaiqu* and detailed its history in Republican-era Shanghai that propagated through media culture. The former researcher explained the founder and the common characteristics based on Franco Fabbri's five genre rules of the rising Shanghai popular songs in the 1930s and 1940s with the introduction of gramophone recordings, radio broadcasts and films; whereas the latter linked this genre to "yellow music" (*huangse yinyue*, 黄色音乐) with pornographic quality and "black music" that related to African American music.

Jones (2001) had also suggested *shidaiqu* was banned in mainland China in the early 1950s because it was "pornography" and "unhealthy." *Li Jin Hui* and his contribution in pioneering the modern Chinese popular music were discussed although he was erased from the history by Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Hence, this musical style was claimed to be the origin of today's modern Chinese popular music. Another study then pointed out the lack of study on the factor of its popularity and success in relation to cultural and social aspects (Chen, 2005). He distinguished the two types of songs carrying distinct messages in the 1930s. They were popular songs founded by *Li Jin Hui* emphasizing on love themes and mass songs based on real life experiences created by his leftist student, *Nie Er*. In addition, the researcher also found less attention was drawn to Chinese popular music study due to the label of "casual" art form in comparison to the detailed compilations of the "serious" mass songs.

Furthermore, Stock (1995) revealed the shifting approaches in producing the Shanghai popular music with its reception by comparing two Zhou Xuan's cassettes issued respectively in 1985 and 1993. He concluded the transformation in social and musical contexts must be applied according to time, place and identity as this greatly impacted the audience's reception of a certain musical form. On the contrary, Moskowitz (2009) looked into the cultural context of biases and critiques regarding the contemporary commercialized Mandopop (Mandarin Chinese pop music) in Taiwan since the early 1980s despite its popularity across China and Hong Kong. He asserted the music of all genres today had created their new forms of songs by employing

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localization from other forms of music to honour the original works and to express creativity.

Apart from *shidaiqu* and Mandopop that mentioned above, de Kloet (2005) and (2010) had explored the revival of Chinese rock music in the mid-1990s through the rising *dakou* culture due to global forces and Chinese culture marketing. The ethnographic study of varying music circumstances and in-depth analysis related to *dakou* culture was also provided, along with the descriptions of pop music variations.

2.6 Conclusion

As a summary, most scholars focused on ethnomusicological research regarding indigenous performing arts around the world, Malaysian Chinese performing arts mainly in dance and theatrical art forms, contemporary Chinese orchestras in Chinesedominated countries such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore as well as Chinese popular music particularly the prevalence of Mandopop in Taiwan and Cantopop in Hong Kong. However, the study on commercialized Chinese orchestra in the setting of Malaysia and the revival of Chinese golden oldies in this context among the multiracial communities were lacking. Thus, a naturalistic inquiry on Regal Orchestra was conducted to fill in the gap of research by investigating another contemporary Chinese orchestra and its transformation, seeking to add another level of knowledge to the existing area of study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Techniques that were used by researchers to conduct a study in order to achieve solutions for respective research issues are known as research method (Kumar, 2008). This chapter reviewed several methods that had been employed in this study. Hence, this qualitative research included literature review, participant observation, observation, interviews and virtual fieldwork that were being discussed in the following subheadings.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has placed the researcher to observe in the world (Froehlich & Frierson-Campbell, 2013). It is an umbrella term for varying genres such as ethnography, phenomenology, case study, narrative inquiry, action and formative research. As ethnographic research was applied in this study, it was conducted in natural settings by using an interpretive approach to investigate the meanings. It looked into the aspects of Regal Orchestra's performance, culture, function, insiders and audience. Furthermore, the researcher had observed actions and interactions, interviewed informants, documented, analysed and made personal reflection. In this study, short visits to Regal Orchestra were chosen instead of a long stay. A "gatekeeper" was then selected to contact and approach the other members of Regal Orchestra. According to Kawulich (2005), the qualitative approaches that used to collect data that contained observing, interviewing and analysis of documents were all classified under "ethnographic methods". Thus, methods such as field notes, photographs, recordings, interviews and conversations were required in data collection.

3.3 Literature Review

Secondary data was collected and reviewed in the first phase of this study in order to decide a workable research according to the research objectives. All documentations were retrieved from the online sources such as books, journals, articles, theses, dissertations, newspapers, encyclopaedias, the orchestra's website. In this research, the following contributed important resources for the study:

- UM library databases
- Websites (http://regalorchestra.com)
- Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/regalorchestra/)
- Local newspaper and online news such as The Star Online and NST Online

Reviewing literature and online resources had helped and prepared the researcher to design research questions and guides before observation and interviews.

3.4 Naturalistic Inquiry

Fieldwork as what DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) described as "active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly, patience" demanded a long period of immersion in the field (p. vii). As this study involved Regal Orchestra, a contemporary Chinese production, the immersion of the researcher at the sites in an urban ethnomusicological practice was different from the traditional fieldwork. Hence, the researcher carried out a naturalistic inquiry by involving herself at the sites following the events of Regal. A time span of research activity from 23rd June 2016 to 27th January 2017 of approximately seven months was conducted.

During sites observation, data was collected and recorded through observation and interview. Furthermore, voice recording, video recording, photography and field notes were aided in data collection for further analysis. This research was considered a practice of home fieldwork which stated by Stock & Chou (2008) as it was conducted in the researcher's native country. This was also what Nettl (2005) described that the researcher was familiar with its targeted research community. One location of the research venue which regarded as the Regal Orchestra's office building was located in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Its address is No. 28, Jalan SS2/103, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia where the map is illustrated in the following Figure 3.1.

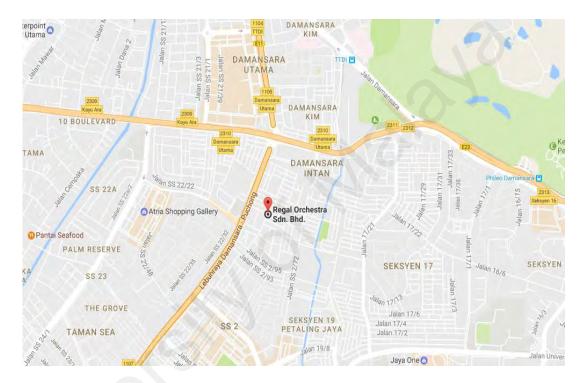


Figure 3.1: Map of Regal Orchestra's company building (Google Map, 2017).

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Junker (1960) developed four types of participant observation in ethnography such as complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer. Observer-as-participant was used by taking part in the event as an "outsider" audience and by observing the performance of "insiders" and the reaction of other audience. Besides, pure observation which started prior to the participant observation allowed the researcher to not change the perception as an observer when getting close to the insiders (Friedrichs & Ludtke, 1975). Therefore, brief observation was able to carry out before the performance began where the researcher joined as an audience to understand and to have clear insight of what was happening around.

In this study, the researcher sought permission to gain entry into the field for observing live performance as a guest of the business owner. This required the conduct of overt observation to acquire the agreement of the participants. In one birthday event, the researcher was even disguised and participated as the Regal Orchestra's manager to blend into the group as an insider. This act was considered successful as some audience had treated the researcher as part of the group as they came to her to request a few songs from the Regal Orchestra's musicians. As Bernard (1994) explained that participant observation demanded the development of rapport between the researcher and the researched community in order for the researcher to act naturally to forego the setting and to focus on data collecting. It was important in this research to look for the nonverbal expressions, interactions and communications among participants and to inspect the time used for each activity.

Table 3.1 below shows several events of Regal Orchestra that were observed and their recording methods. Researcher participated as an audience from before the performance started until the end for about two to three hours in each performance; while observing its surroundings, performers, audience, interactions between performers and audience, audience's response and requests. Video recordings, sound recordings and camera were used to record the live performances and the surrounding environments. This had provided a clear idea by watching the whole process of the performance. Besides, a dinner meal was also ordered and paid in Opium Kuala Lumpur to resemble as an audience who came to enjoy food while watching the live *pipa* solo performance. On the other hand, musicians who had waited and rested in The Mutiara Palace Restaurant were also observed briefly to explore their routines of behaviour and they were being interviewed casually to obtain personal details, experiences and

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information regarding Regal Orchestra. All information that had been observed and gained during or after the period of observation were gathered and written down in the field notes for eventual analysis.

No.	Date	Time	Duration	Venue	Event	Recording methods
1	29/06/2016	7.30pm- 9.30pm	2 hours	Opium Kuala Lumpur, KL	Pipa solo	 Video recording Audio recording Field notes
2	02/07/2016	7.00pm- 7.15pm & 8.00pm- 10.15pm	2 hours 30 mins	The Mutiara Palace Restaurant, PJ	Birthday celebration	 Video recording Audio recording Field notes
3	14/10/2016	8.30pm- 10.30pm	2 hours	Dream Maly Theatre (梦.剧场), PJ	Jun Koay & Gary - "A Love Story Theme Night"	 Video recording Field notes

 Table 3.1: Observation of events performed by Regal Orchestra and recording methods

3.4.2 Interview

According to Crabtree and Miller (1999), interview involved the provision of information on the domain of interest from the key informant to the researcher through formal or informal conversations. The musicians, members and the founder of the Regal Orchestra were interviewed and contacted through a few different methods such as by face-to-face interview, social media (Facebook and Whatsapp) and by phone. All questions were not necessarily prepared ahead as a list of research issues was sufficient (Froehlich & Frierson-Campbell, 2013). Nevertheless, the researcher still jotted down a long list of interview questions in case anything was forgotten despite clearly known the main focus point and other issues of this study.

No.	Name of Informants	Types of interview	Date of interview	Duration	Recording methods
1	Alan Lam Kee Leong	Semi- structured	23/06/2016	2 hours	Audio recording
		Semi- structured	27/01/2017	2 hours	 Audio recording Jottings
2	Tan Huey Joo	Informal conversational	02/07/2016	1 hour	Audio recording
3	Loh Wei Nee	Informal conversational	24/06/2016	30 minutes	Jottings
		Semi- structured	29/06/2016	30 minutes	Audio recordingJottings
4	Ngooi Perng Fei	Informal conversational	02/07/2016	1 hour	Audio recording
5	Bryan Ngooi Perng Yih	Informal conversational	02/07/2016	1 hour	Audio recording
6	Koay Mei Jun	Semi- structured	14/10/2016	30 minutes	Jottings
7	Tong Hoe Chee	Semi- structured	14/10/2016	30 minutes	Jottings

Table 3.2: Types of interview conducted and recording methods

There were three types of interviews being categorized into structured, semistructured and unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Semi-structured and unstructured interviews were employed in this research. Table 3.2 above shows the types of interview conducted and several ways of recording the qualitative interviews. Semistructured interviews were consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions where the researcher had some freedom to modify the questions according to the responses of participants. They were carried out in the appointed interviews where the researcher and participants were aware of the particular session. For example, the director was the key informant of Regal Orchestra to obtain historical overview and detailed information on all events. Thus, an elaborated and well-prepared script was prepared to make full use of the intensive scheduled interview session.

The unstructured-interview, on the other hand, is also known as an informal conversational interview or in-depth interview and so forth (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alecander, 1990). This kind of interview is flexible, which executed without predetermined questions and answers, but it is prepared with comprehensive knowledge. A few musicians of Regal Orchestra were spontaneously being interviewed casually either before the performance, during the intermission or after the performance whenever the researcher earned the chance to do so. It was also without realizing that the researcher was going to meet or interview the participants during participant observation. Therefore, the researcher was allowed to see from the participants' perspectives and had insights regarding their social realities such as the musician's personal information, other types of experience as a professional musician apart from being a veteran Regal Orchestra member, techniques in music playing, perception towards Regal Orchestra and so forth. Furthermore, the researcher also found that the participants were more comfortable to share during the unstructured-interviews as compared to the semi-structured interviews. Perhaps, the informal context and circumstances had led to a more relaxed atmosphere.

"In qualitative interviews, words are the main currency of interviewing and subject to analytic interpretation; audio recording of interview talk has become standard" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 69). As all interview sessions were very important to be recorded for further interpretation and data analysis, they were either recorded through the voice recorder on smartphone or with pen and paper notes during or after the interview although there was once the audio recorder did not work without the realization of the researcher. Voice recorder was placed in between the interviewer and interviewee to obtain clear sound from both sides. Besides, it was more suitable for dialogue recording as compared to jottings to give full attention during the conversations and to avoid distraction from frequently jotting down the notes. Table 3.3 below compiles the informants' profile of Regal Orchestra and their playing experience.

No.	Name	Gender	State of origin in Malaysia	Position in Regal Orchestra	Instrument played in Regal Orchestra	Experience of playing in Regal Orchestra
1	Alan Lam Kee Leong	Male	Kelantan	Director & Musician	Guzheng	13 years since year 2003 to present.
2	Tan Huey Joo	Female	Johor Bahru	Music educator & Musician	Guzheng & zhongruan	Between 11 to 13 years to present.
3	Loh Wei Nee	Female	Terengganu	Musician	<i>Pipa</i> & keyboard	8 years from year 2008 to June 2016 & A guest performer
4	Ngooi Perng Fei	Male	Selangor	Musician	Dizi & hulusi	Between 15 to 20 years to present.
5	Bryan Ngooi Perng Yih	Male	Selangor	Musician	Erhu	Between 13 to 16 years to present.
6	Koay Mei Jun	Female	Kuala Lumpur	Musician	Keyboard & yangqin	4 years from year 2006 to early of 2010 & A guest performer in October 2016.
7	Tong Hoe Chee	Male	Johor Bahru	Musician	Guitar	A guest performer in October 2016.

Table 3.3: Profile of Regal Orchestra's informants

3.4.3 Virtual Fieldwork

Virtual fieldwork is a data collection for ethnographic study through technologically communicated realities (Barz & Cooley, 1997). The study mostly involved the usage of

internet and electronic devices such as mobile phone to surf for all the information regarding the research subjects such as new reports from 'The Star,' videos from 'Youtube,' background description from 'Facebook,' forum discussion from 'Lowyat,' and so forth. Virtual fieldwork was crucial to obtain data that cannot be gained through other methods of data collection due to the increasing use of social media and online technology nowadays. Furthermore, detailed information regarding the research subject was available virtually on numerous websites. It was also the most convenient method that allowed the collection of varying data such as videos, images, books, newspapers and so forth without undergoing human interaction to retrieve data. Thus, Regal Orchestra's historical background, map and location of its company, past performances, songs performed and their latest activities were checked from their websites. List of websites is thus recorded in the following Table 3.4.

Name	Website Address
Regal Orchestra	http://regalorchestra.com
	http://www.facebook.com/regalorchestra/
	http://regalentertainment.weebly.com/
	https://www.youtube.com/user/KeeJanRegal
	http://www.thestar.com.my/metro/community/2015/10/02/m
	essage-of-togetherness-mall-holds-multicultural-midautumn-
	fest-gathering/
	http://letrasmania.online/mp3/regal-orchestra.html
	http://www.weddingsmalaysia.com/vendor/regal-
	orchestra/191
	http://www.artisttrove.com/artist/155856558948/Regal+Orch
	estra/videos https://forum.lowyat.net/
KeeJan Music School	http://www.keejan.com/
	https://www.facebook.com/musicacademy.keejan
	https://www.facebook.com/KeeJanMusicSchool/
Dream Maly Theatre	https://www.facebook.com/DreamMalyTheatre/

Table 3.4: List of websites regarding Regal Orchestra

3.5 Post-Fieldwork

In post-fieldwork, all details that had been jotted down in the papers were transferred and recorded in the full version of field notes. Then, they were kept for data analysis which was the next step of the research process. In fact, the transcription for the recorded interview sessions was time-consuming depending on the length and the clarity of the recordings. Furthermore, frequent revision of data had been required to gain deep insights for the next step of writing. On the other hand, the categorization of headings and subheadings was done in order to classify data accordingly, for example, all data regarding Chinese song lists were grouped under Chinese ensemble. Moreover, the relevant photos that captured during the fieldwork were also attached to the dissertation in order to provide clear illustrations of the performance. Thus, all data had been organized, transcribed, analysed, drafted and edited until a satisfactory writing of dissertation was produced.

3.6 Conclusion

The three stages of research methodology that described above had demanded to answer the research questions which aligned with the research objectives. Triangulation was applied as data had been collected from various sources. This was to cross-check the reliability and validity of research evidence. Therefore, the research methods that had been used for data validation were composed of participant observation, semistructured interviews, unstructured interviews and virtual fieldwork.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

This chapter showed data collected using approaches discussed in Chapter 3 together with analysis and discussion. Hence, the formation of Regal Orchestra and its early development, the influence of transformation and its cultural identities, Regal Orchestra's overall organization, its varying musical bands and drum groups, performances and repertoires performed, issues encountered by the group were being explored and examined in different sub-headings.

4.2 Formation and Early Development of Regal Orchestra

Regal Orchestra (艺展华乐演艺团) gained its official name in the year of 2003 as according to the founder of the orchestra who is also a virtuoso guzheng player, Alan Lam Kee Leong (personal communication, June 23, 2016). Lam described that he "had a little story to share" regarding how he was inspired to form this group. The founder described that it was all started in the year of 1999 where he obtained his bachelor's degree in bio industry from University Putra Malaysia (UPM) and when he was working as a supervisor in an electronic factory. During the same year, the guzheng Grade 9 examination from the China's Central Conservatory of Music was newly introduced in Malaysia. Due to the encouragement of Lam's father to not abandon his musical playing halfway despite recognizing the priority for higher educational study, Lam seized the opportunity to take the examination immediately. Eventually in the next year, in 2000, he passed the guzheng examination which paid off with his efforts. Thereafter, he decided to work as a part time music educator in music centre although he revealed that he had never dreamed of a music career during his university years. One major reason was his fear of financial insecurity in this field. Therefore, the change in profession from the non-musical field to the field of music was solely by chance.

Between the years of 2000 and 2003, Lam performed as a *guzheng* soloist apart from teaching. That was a period of time where he called it as "testing the waters" to explore the possibilities of this field before he had determined to make a transition into a full-time music career. During his few years of working as a solo musician and a *guzheng* teacher, Lam met Dato' Jennifer Low, his "benefactor" who had suggested him to form a performing group with the other existing musicians instead of performing solo as this can increase his popularity and fame. Subsequently, she proposed the name 'Regal' which quoted from her restaurant's name – "Regal Restaurant". Since then, Lam had used the name 'Regal Orchestra' to debut as a Chinese musical ensemble where he registered in the year 2003.

The name "Regal" is expressed as majestic and grand; whereas "Orchestra" represents the musical band, ensemble or musical group which did not necessarily refer to only Chinese, it could be "any" orchestra as explained by Lam. The group was firstly commenced using with only a couple of Chinese musical instruments such as *erhu*, *dizi*, *guzheng*, *sheng*, *zhongruan*, *pipa* and *yangqin*. Among these instruments, *yangqin* and *pipa* were the least played. When the percussion were being added later, Lam led his group, consisted of the four main categories of instruments [wind (blown, \mathcal{K}), bowed string (bowed, $\frac{1}{2}$), plucked string (plucked, $\frac{2}{12}$) and percussion (struck, $\frac{1}{17}$)] that were commonly used in *huayue tuan* for every performance. Nevertheless, Lam's ensemble was able to include a few types of other songs such as English and Malay songs depending on the given situation and customer's request. Chinese repertoires were still belonged to the top lists of songs in performances. Moreover, due to their ability in performing repertoires other than the Chinese, they were also invited to perform in many shows at that time including a Malaysia's tourism project in Putrajaya.

During the early years of establishment, Regal Orchestra had received good reputation and tremendous shows were being offered to them especially during festive seasons. For instance, there were a total of few hundred performances in a year and more than 100 shows had been performed during the Chinese New Year as the soreness in the hands was felt. The band was usually consisted of 7 to 8 members. However, it was still depended on the client's demand as the employment of two musicians was possible. The budget for recruiting two musicians back then was about RM1000; whereas roughly RM4000-5000 for a band of eight performers. Hence, a band member costed approximately from RM500-600. Lam revealed that he actually did not know the market rate of this business at the very beginning including the rate of a performer, a show and the business expenses. All he did was by his own estimation, for instance, he calculated whether the payment he obtained was enough to cover for the costs and expenses. Afterwards, he then divided it to his friends in the group. Nonetheless, Lam had to consider on generating more revenue for his business to survive.

According to Lam, his business was better in the early years compared to now when the market was less competitive. The establishment of Regal Orchestra as a group was shifting away from the concept of individualism ($\uparrow \land \pm 义$, *geren zhuyi*) which helped his business to survive in the music industry. The difference between a performing group and a solo performer was the increased number of shows that they were capable to accept. Although he claimed that being a soloist allowed him to be famous, satisfied his financial need was more practical and important as compared to obtaining fame. Furthermore, his early acquaintance with various performers, clients, customers and audiences had provided a wider platform to promote Regal Orchestra to attract more business. As a result, the formation of Regal Orchestra as a musical group had provided better opportunity for the expansion of music business. Chinese Golden Oldies or *shidaiqu* and classical Chinese music were the most popular songs performed in Regal Orchestra back then and until now. Lam explained that *shidaiqu* were selected because they were so well known and familiar among the Chinese Malaysian community especially those who hold buying power (购买力). He referred to these people as above 40 years old, in the middle-aged or older age group currently. Most importantly, *shidaiqu* had been popular since the late 1930s and it retains its position today as a favourite among the mature listeners. Probably this was due to their feelings of nostalgic which brought back memories when listened to this type of songs during their school days (Loo & Loo, 2013). Hence, the market at present still shows demand for this genre of music especially among the older Chinese communities. However, as younger generation especially those who born after the 1990s, they were less exposed to this kind of "classical" *shidaiqu*, the selection of songs for performance was gradually incorporating more popular mainstream songs in order to cope with the younger consumers such as Mandopop and English popular music.

Regal Orchestra accommodated according to the taste of customer primarily. In fact, any popular hits from the current market that were suitable to be performed were regarded as repertoires. Although the Malaysian Chinese community was the targeted consumer group, Regal Orchestra also performed Malay songs by using Chinese instruments during the Malay's celebration of Hari Raya. However, Lam confessed the trouble of playing Malay music with Chinese instruments. Firstly, a limited choice of Malay repertoire decreased the chance of performing Malay songs. Next, the absence of Malay musical score that notated for Chinese instruments also required hard work. Consequently, Lam had to purchase a compact disc (originally known as Compact Disc Digital Audio, CD-DA) of the Malay songs back then, in order to transcribe into notations and arrange for the accompaniment parts. Occasionally Regal Orchestra had also provided *tabla* players for Malay and Indian banquet.

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Apart from catering to customer preferences by looking into the music market demands, the availability of talented musicians played a crucial role in the production of a diverse and quality performance. For example, he supplied more choices of *guzheng* solo performance if many *guzheng* players were available; when *pipa* players were less, performance for *pipa* was being reduced. Lam disclosed a performance cannot exist without human talent (人才) which he identified as the most important asset of the business and to ensure the sustainability of his music business. Nonetheless, all of his musicians were freelances as he could not afford to employ permanent employees. Hence, one way to guarantee the availability of human talent was by keeping a long contact list of freelance musicians, while another way was by cultivating students' talent through providing musical classes in his music school – KeeJan Music School (艺展音 乐学院) – in order to produce talented young musicians for future performance.

4.3 Organization of Regal Orchestra

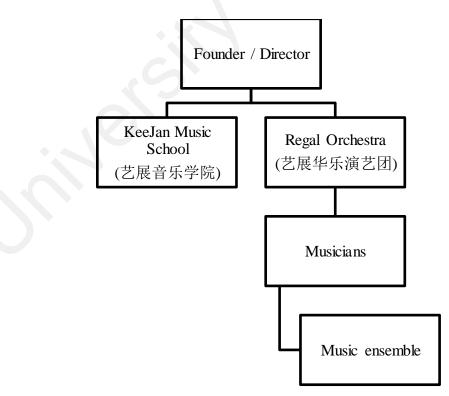


Figure 4.1: Organization chart of Regal Orchestra in 2003

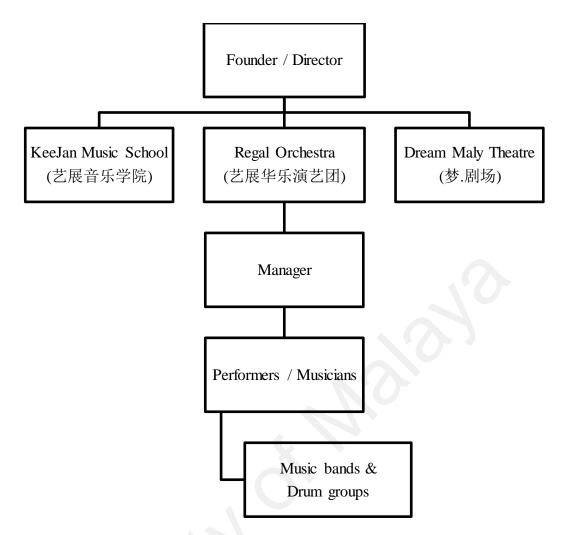


Figure 4.2: Organization chart of Regal Orchestra in 2017

The above chart indicated in Figure 4.1 shows a simple and straightforward organization structure of Regal Orchestra in year 2003 where it was firstly established as compared to the more elaborate current organizational chart after fourteen years had passed, in 2017 (Figure 4.2). The early formation of Regal Orchestra constituted of the director of Regal Orchestra (Alan Lam Kee Leong) who also founded KeeJan Music School (艺展音乐学院) in year 2000. Dream Maly Theatre (梦.剧场) was the latest production which set up from late 2015 to the end of year 2016. Nowadays, Regal Orchestra hired a manager (Jamie Teng) and more freelance musicians to play in diverse musical bands and drum groups. Performers from dance and theatre were also employed to collaborate with musicians occasionally. The director owned the company and he provided fund for all the operations of his business from then to now.

In Regal Orchestra, most of the tasks were handled to the manager nowadays as compared to the heavy burden of the director who managed the group all by himself in the early years. Thus, the director now carried less job responsibility on the event's planning. His main role was to review and decide the song list for performances. He is also one of the *guzheng* musicians who actively perform in Regal Orchestra. At other times, he was responsible to direct and solve any problems encountered in the company such as hiring musicians, socializing with clients, responding to customer's requests, marketing the company's events and so forth. On the contrary, the manager had a larger job scope as compared to the director which involved accounting, planning, price quotation and sound checking. She contacted and connected with prospective customers, existing clients and the performers.

Planning an event for music performance is relatively easy and it only took a short time as commented by Lam as he had accumulated years of experience. Nowadays, the shortest duration to prepare for a performance could be the day before the show or with impromptu due to numerous years of sophisticated experience. The planning procedure began with the communication between the client and the manager or the director by acquiring particular details of event and their requests were noted. Contents of conversation including the event's venue, theme of event, date of performance, type of music performance, number of musicians, preferred songs, non-preferred songs and other remarks. In addition, the stage's decoration and the availability of sound system were usually prepared ahead by the client. Then, the photos were taken and sent for reference. Musicians were not required to communicate with audience as this was the job of the event's host.

The songs available to musicians of Regal Orchestra were estimated to be few hundreds currently as compared to less number of repertoires back then although without the actual statistical records. As Lam's job was to prepare song lists, he selected and arranged the repertoire to give an idea to the clients. It was either based on the clients' requests or selected by Lam. For example, Lam had to consider the suitability of matching between the songs being requested and the instruments used. Next, it was the consideration on the number of instrument being employed as more instruments produced better and richer sound than a solo instrument. Then, the type of instrument selected was also a concern as different instruments provided varying range of sound. There were also instruments that were able modulate easily as well as those with difficulty in doing so such as *guzheng*. Hence, Lam disclosed that the presence of vocalist also restricted the choice of Chinese instruments used in a band due to this reason. Whenever the requests were not able to be fulfilled, advice was given to the clients or else the payments had to be raised. Next, he had either confirmed after the discussions or drafted the song lists again until the clients satisfied. Nonetheless, the musician group had tried their best in performing solo or together when they met the unexpected song requests during the event.

On the one hand, Lam confessed that the clients nowadays were more diverse compared to the early years of establishment. Nevertheless, Chinese people had contributed to the greatest percentage to his group of clients from then until now. These Chinese customers composed of Chinese-educated, English-educated and those corporate representatives. Past experience including clients from other ethnic group, for instance, there was an Indian company that appreciated the uniqueness of Chinese orchestra performance and hired Regal Orchestra to perform in its event.

Regal Orchestra consisted of only freelance musicians employed for all the performances from year 2003 to year 2017. They are predominantly Chinese and many of them who joined the organization had performed for numerous events. Every one of them has other jobs apart from performing part-time in this organization such as there were students, teachers, musicians and so forth. This was due to the lack of financial

support to provide full-time wages for all performers. Number of performers hired for an event was ranged from one to 20 people. Nevertheless, smaller ensembles that made up of a few musicians such as a band or drum group were commonly performed in contrast to a large-scale orchestra due to lower costs. Examples of varying music bands are classical Chinese ensemble, fusion band and jazz band while drum groups containing *Tang Ren Gu* and Muhibbah drum group. Furthermore, customers rather employed large Chinese orchestra from schools or universities with a much cheaper rate compared to Regal Orchestra, for example, RM50 is the rate for a student; RM500 is for a professional musician from Regal Orchestra.

The performer's hiring process commenced after the acceptance and confirmation of a show. First round of hiring consisted of the familiar members (such as those veteran members who joined Regal Orchestra since its formation in 2003) who had performed in the same group from past experience regardless of their playing skills. Subsequently, the second round or more rounds of employment was then substituting those who were not available for the performance. Another important criterion for the selection of performers was their familiarity with the music. Hence, the musical abilities of all performers such as their strengths and weaknesses were recognized for better allocation of human resources.

Musicians had their own responsibilities to learn and to know each of the songs that they were going to perform. One way was to search the music scores on the internet; otherwise they improvised the music. As long as the melody and harmony parts were figured out by every instrumentalist, the team was ready to perform. Every instrumentalist had its role in playing a specific musical part when they performed together as a group, for example, the keyboardist and guitarist were focused on the harmony section, whereas *erhu* and *guzheng* played the melody lines.

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Performers with extensive performing experience whether from the inside or outside of Regal Orchestra were not required to rehearse prior to the events. This was informed by several experienced musicians – Loh Wei Nee (personal communication, June 24, 2016), Bryan Ngooi Perng Yih (personal communication, July 2, 2016) and Ngooi Perng Fei (personal communication, July 2, 2016) who claimed that they did not need to attend any rehearsal sections as they were capable of performing on the spot due to many years of playing experience in the group. However, for members whom experience were lacking especially those new members, they needed one or two times of rehearsal with the performing team. New members such as students who trained in KeeJan Music School were given opportunities to perform in Regal Orchestra to gain experience.

In addition to the occasional events, the company in recent years also contracted with restaurants including Opium Kuala Lumpur and another restaurant that located inside Eastin hotel Kuala Lumpur by providing Chinese music services on daily and weekly basis respectively. Lam and his fellow musicians had alternately performed in Opium KL every day for 1 to 2 years as solo instrumentalists, whereas it had been three years since the vocal and live band service supplied to the restaurant in Eastin Hotel Kuala Lumpur on every Thursday.

Apart from KeeJan Music School which specialized in music education since constituted in year 2000, the latest establishment of Dream Maly Theatre (occupies between 60 and 70 seats) had provided a platform for all kinds of fusion showcases essentially in Chinese music and other genres of performing arts comprising dance and drama. The theatre held weekly performance on every Friday night from 8.30pm to 10.30pm with an entrance fee's collection of RM35.00. It functioned similarly to the Theatre Lounge Café in Kuala Lumpur which served with complimentary snacks, free drinks and a few food choices for purchase while emphasizing on the quality of music performance. Freelance musicians from Regal Orchestra also played in this small theatre together with other performers occasionally. At other times, the theatre space was opened for public rental at a rate of RM50 per hour or RM800-1500 per event provided with air-conditioning system.

4.4 Performances of Regal Orchestra

As performances of Regal Orchestra were essentially to accommodate the client preferences depending on each occasion, the need for the incorporation of diverse and versatile performances with mainly smaller sized ensembles appeared to be the consequence throughout 14 years of its music business development. The Chinese music organization adapted to Western, local and modern cultures while gradually adding and transforming itself from classical Chinese ensemble to commercialized multi-cultural Chinese band and drum group during the growing process. The establishment of varying ensembles is illustrated below in Figure 4.3 and a few performances were elaborated to exemplify this phenomenon.

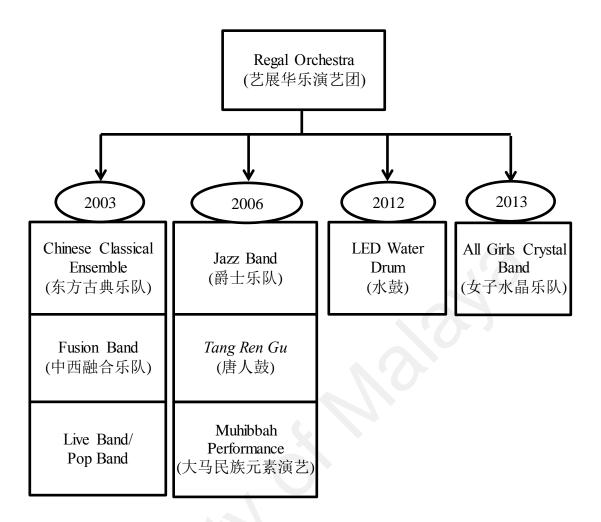


Figure 4.3: Diverse bands and groups of Regal Orchestra

Regal Orchestra generally carried out its performances in small ensembles consisting of instruments such as the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Western instruments. The group also employed vocalist depending on the choice of customer. Besides, the combination of types of musical instruments used in ensembles was not fixed and it was changeable according to different events, either in the category of pure Chinese instruments, Chinese drums, pure Western instruments, Muhibbah instruments, Muhibbah drums, modern instruments, modern drums or a mix among these instruments.

Context of performance was ranged from personal to corporate; indoor to outdoor; concrete building to natural site and so forth as affirmed by Lam, "anywhere, you just name it" (personal communication, June 23, 2016). This was because apart from their own customers, musicians were also placed at random locations by event agencies

outside. To name a few examples of setting were shopping mall, shop, hotel, restaurant, corporate building, poolside and even in forest. In addition, numerous event performance services were provided by Regal Orchestra. They included wedding dinner, opening gambit, celebration dinner, shopping mall event, birthday party, restaurant party, restaurant event, hotel event, company dinner event, hotel event, Chinese New Year celebration, festival celebration and Muhibbah music performance.

Regal Orchestra's diverse performance bands implied a vast range of repertoires being performed: from classical to current popular; from instrumental to vocal; and from the east to the west. Musical genres that covered including C-Pop or Chinese popular music consisting the four categories of *shidaiqu*, Mandopop, Cantopop and Hokkien pop, Chinese orchestral pieces, Chinese folk music, English popular music and music from Malaysian ethnic groups such as Malay and Indian. Among these genres, Chinese popular music such as *shidaiqu* and Mandopop especially those sung by Teresa Teng, one of the most significant singers of Taiwan, remained a favourite genre in all Chinese-related musical ensemble and bands. Lists of popular selections were tabled, stating with their respective released year and original singer. Every musical selection depended on either the choice of customer or the musician itself. In general, majority of songs were familiar and popular among the Malaysian Chinese community since the ethnic Chinese contributed to the largest portion of the consumer group in Regal Orchestra.

Duration of a performance was wholly according to the client's decision due to its performance stage was solely prepared by the customer. Lam informed that the request to perform only one song was possible and sometimes 3 to 4 hours in response to client's request. In general, the duration of a music performance was approximately 2 hours (two sets of 45 minutes session and a 30 minutes intermission in between).

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4.4.1 Chinese Classical Ensemble

Chinese Classical Ensemble (东方古典乐队) was debuted as the first group that was formed by Regal Orchestra since its inception in year 2003. It is considered as the longest existing type of ensemble in Regal Orchestra which continued until today. Although this ensemble was usually conducted utilizing with only limited types of Chinese instruments for performance from back then to present, numerous mix and match among the available instruments created tremendous varied combinations in the ensemble (refer to Table 4.1 below).

Regal Orchestra Chinese Classical Ensembles				
No. of	Name of Instruments			
Types				
1	Guzheng			
	Pipa			
	Yangqin			
2	Guzheng and erhu			
	Guzheng and pipa			
	Guzheng and zhongruan			
	Guzheng and dizi			
	Erhu and dizi			
3	Guzheng, erhu and dizi			
	Guzheng, erhu and pipa			
	Guzheng, erhu and yangqin			
	Guzheng, dizi and pipa			
	Guzheng, hulusi and electronic percussion pad			
4	Guzheng, erhu, pipa and zhongruan			
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi and zhongruan			
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi and pipa			
	Guzheng, erhu, yangqin and electronic percussion pad			
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi and electronic percussion pad			
	Guzheng, dizi, pipa and electronic percussion pad			
	Guzheng, dizi, zhongruan and electronic percussion pad			
	Guzheng, zhongruan, pipa and electronic percussion pad			
	Dizi, zhongruan, yangqin and electronic percussion pad			
5	Guzheng, erhu, pipa, dizi and zhongruan			
	Guzheng, erhu, pipa, dizi and yangqin			
	Guzheng, erhu, pipa, zhongruan and sheng			
	Guzheng, erhu, pipa, zhongruan and electronic percussion pad			
	Guzheng, erhu, yangqin, sheng and electronic percussion pad			

 Table 4.1: Combination of instruments in Chinese Classical Ensemble



Figure 4.4: Chinese Classical Ensemble in 2003 (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2010).

In year 2003, Chinese instruments such as *erhu*, *dizi*, *guzheng*, *sheng* and *zhongruan* were performed the most (Figure 4.4). On the contrary, *pipa* and *yangqin* were used the least during that time. This small scale and single ethnic Chinese ensemble gave the resemblance of the structural form and instrumentations used by the predecessor of the large-scale modern Chinese orchestra in China – *Jiangnan Sizhu* ensemble in the early year of establishment (Han & Gray, 1979), except that the electronic percussion pad was later added into the group to provide beats and rhythm. Chinese Classical Ensemble utilized either one or two electronic percussion pads to produce varying sound effects instead of several detached sets of traditional Chinese percussion that used in conventional Chinese orchestra.



Figure 4.5: Chinese Classical Ensemble in 2016 (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra).

The common performance settings for this ensemble were Chinese New Year celebration, mid-autumn festival, shopping mall event, corporate event, traditional birthday function, traditional wedding dinner, Chinese-related festival event and so forth. Figure 4.4 illustrates an earliest form of Chinese Classical Ensemble in year 2003 where the performance took place in a shopping mall; whereas Figure 4.5 above shows the same group of musicians performed again after 13 years, in year 2016 which located in a restaurant. The former performed in a public setting, whereas the latter was a Chinese birthday function that celebrated for an elder man. Both ensembles comprised four of the same instruments used including *dizi*, *erhu*, *zhong ruan* and *guzheng* (from left to right) where the *dizi* player also blowed *paixiao* (排箫, panpipes) alternately according to different songs in 2016's event. Interestingly, in addition to the adult's ensemble, there was also a children version of Chinese Classical Ensemble (Figure 4.6 below)

which occasionally showcased by the students from KeeJan Music School as a platform to practice their music talents and traditions in public settings.



Figure 4.6: Children's Chinese Classical Ensemble (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2012).

Musician's sitting position in the group was usually arranged according to the appearance and types of instruments, as well as depended on the shape and size of performance stage. In general, the common sequence from the perception of an audience was *guzheng* to the right, instruments with upward appearances and without shifting movements to both sides such as *zhongruan*, *pipa* and *dizi* were placed in the middle, while *erhu* which required space to bow to the right side sits to the left. However, as the group performed in non-fixed settings, the space and the distinct shapes of stage (eg., oval, circle, rectangular, etc.) became the criteria that caused to varying sequences and different positions in sitting arrangement. For instance, sometimes they were positioned in U-shaped, a straight line or occasionally in a few rows from the front

to the back and so forth. Lam informed that orchestral setting was not an issue for him as well as to his musicians since they were used to perform and able to arrange by themselves (*ibid*.).

In the above cases (Figure 4.4 & 4.5), musicians were arranged from *dizi* or *paixiao* to *erhu*, *zhongruan* and *guzheng* where Lam himself often participated as a *guzheng* player in most functions, together with his wife on *zhongruan*. The other two musicians are the veteran members of Regal Orchestra who had collaborated with Lam even before the establishment of the group. Both figures show the performers were all well dressed in traditional Chinese costumes such as *cheongsam* (Chinese long gown or known as *qipao*) or *samfus* (Chinese trouser suits). However, in 2003, non-customized colour of costumes were worn in contrast to the nowadays' standardized clothing. Red clothing that symbolizes long life was dressed in conform to the "longevity" (*shou*, \overline{R}) (Li, 2011) or birthday function that celebrating for the elder's longevity.

Apart from the staged performance which conducted for the most part in 2003, performance settings nowadays had been shifted down the stage occasionally. Lam was seen sitting beside the reception entrance alone while playing his *guzheng* solo one hour before the birthday function started, in 2016 (Figure 4.7 below). His purpose of sitting and playing at the entrance by greeting and socializing with all the guests who arrived conformed to what Tan (2000) had demonstrated that the social function of Chinese orchestra was to promote healthy culture (*jiankang wenhua*) in the society. This also exhibited by the rest of the music team members who waited patiently at the restaurant one hour before the birthday function until their turn to perform. During this waiting period, although the musicians neither practiced nor rehearsed the songs as their instruments were already set up on the stage, they gathered and socialized with each other which positively strengthened their relationships.



Figure 4.7: Guzheng solo (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra).

During the early year of 2003, the most celebrated musical genre that performed by Chinese Classical Ensemble were composed of traditional Chinese orchestral music, traditional Chinese folk music, *shidaiqu* and Mandopop. A few examples of the Chinese orchestral pieces and folk songs including *Golden Snake Dance*, *Colourful Clouds Chasing The Moon* and *Beautiful Flowers On A Full Moon*. These non-vocal music are the common repertoires that performed regularly by other conventional Chinese orchestras in Malaysia. The following Table 4.2 below illustrates a short collection of popular Chinese folk music selections that originated from China's Qing and Ming dynasties and famous Chinese orchestral pieces from 1930s to 1950s which performed by Regal Orchestra.

No.	Title	Year	Origin / Singer
1	Fengyang Flower Drum	Ming	China
	(Feng Yang Hua Gu,凤阳花鼓)	Dynasty	
2	Jasmine Flower	Qing	China
	(Mo Li Hua, 茉莉花, originated from Xian Hua	Dynasty	
	Diao,鲜花调)		
3	Colourful Clouds Chasing The Moon	Qing	China
	(Cai Yun Zhui Yue, 彩云追月)	Dynasty	
4	Golden Snake Dance	1934	Nie Er
	(Jin She Kuang Wu, 金蛇狂舞)		(聂耳)
5	Beautiful Flowers On A Full Moon	1935	Huang Yi
	(Hua Hao Yue Yuan, 花好月圆)		Jun
			(黄貽鈞)
6	Stepping High	1954	Loi Man
	(Bou Bou Gou, 步步高)		Seng
			(吕文成)
7	Great Happiness	1958	Liu Ming
	(Xi Yang Yang, 喜洋洋)		Yuan
			(刘明源)

Table 4.2: Popular Chinese orchestral and folk music selections

Shidaiqu which sung by famous artists of its era from the 1920s to 1950s still maintain its position as a genre of top hits among middle-aged and older Chinese audience and thus, became one of the reasons Dama Asia Production transformed its classical Chinese orchestra to revive this once out-of-fashion music genre (Loo & Loo, 2014). This phenomenon was perhaps a continuation in the context of Regal Orchestra since its inception as the ensemble catered to its mainly Chinese clients and of these age groups by performing a large number of *shidaiqu*. Selections of famous songs from singers such as Zhou Xuan, Ge Lan and Bai Guang were often chosen by clients. Furthermore, Mandopop that had brought to fame by the famous singers of Taiwan, Teresa Teng was the most well-received music genre in Regal Orchestra from then until now. Examples of *shidaiqu* and Mandopop popular selections since the year 2003 were *Evening Primrose, Don't Pick The Wild Flowers By Roadside, Sweet as Honey, The*

Moon Represents My Heart and so forth. Table 4.3 compiles famous selections of shidaiqu and Mandopop in Regal Orchestra.

No.	Title	Year	Singer
1	Picking Betel Nuts (Cai Bin Lang, 采槟榔)	1930	Zhou Xuan (周旋)
2	When Will You Come Again (He Ri Jun Zai Lai,何日君再来)	1937	Zhou Xuan (周旋)
3	Blooming Flowers And The Full Moon (Yue Yuan Hua Hao, 月圆花好)	1940	Zhou Xuan (周旋)
4	Rose, Rose, I Love You (Mei Gui Mei Gui Wo Ai Ni, 玫瑰、玫瑰我爱你, originally known as Mei Gui A Mei Gui, 玫瑰啊玫瑰)	1940	Yao Li (姚莉)
5	Heaven On Earth (Tian Shang Ren Jian, 天上人间)	1941	Li Li Hua (李丽华)
6	Evening Primrose (Ye Lai Xiang, 夜来香)	1944	Li Xiang Lan (李香兰)
7	Night Shanghai (Ye Shanghai, 夜上海)	1946	Zhou Xuan (周旋)
8	Winter Jasmine (Ying Chun Hua, 迎春花)	1951	Chang Loo (<i>Zhang Lu</i> , 张 露)
9	Lover's Tears (Qing Ren De Yan Lei, 情人的眼泪)	1955	Poon Sow Keng (Pan Xiu Qiong, 潘秀琼)
10	I Want Your Love (Wo Yao Ni De Ai, 我要你的爱)	1957	Grace Chang (Ge Lan, 葛兰)
11	The Evening Bell Of Nan Ping (Nan Ping Wan Zhong, 南屏晚鐘)	1958	Tsui Ping (Cui Ping, 崔 萍)
12	Remembrance of River (Xiang Si He Pan, 相思河畔)	1962	Tsui Ping (Cui Ping, 崔 萍)
13	Seeing You Makes Me Smile (Wo Ji Jian Ni Jiu Xiao, 我一见你就笑)	1968	Teresa Teng (<i>Deng Li Jun</i> , 邓丽君)

Table 4.3: Popular Shidaiqu and Mandopop selections

Table 4.3, continued

14	The Past Can Only Be Reminisced	1970	You Ya
14		1970	
	(Wang Shi Zhi Neng Hui Wei, 往事只能回味)		(尤雅)
1.5	YY XY X7	1070	
15	Happy New Year	1972	Zi Ling & Tan
	(Xin Nian Hao, 新年好)		Shun Cheng
			(紫凌 & 谭顺
			成)
16	The Moon Represents My Heart	1972	Chen Fen Lan
	(Yue Liang Dai Biao Wo De Xin,		(陈芬兰)
	月亮代表我的心)		
17	Thousands Of Words	1972	Teresa Teng
	(Qian Yan Wan Yu,千言万语)		(Deng Li Jun,
			邓丽君)
18	Don't Pick The Wild Flowers By Roadside	1973	Teresa Teng
	(Lu Bian De Ye Hua Bu Yao Cai,		(Deng Li Jun,
	路边的野花不要采)		邓丽君)
19	Other Side Of The River	1975	Jiang Lei
17	(Zai Shui Yi Fang,在水一方)	1575	(江蕾)
	$(\Sigma u \ Shu \ H \ I \ ung, \square \land ())$		(正田)
20	Story Of A Small Town	1978	Teresa Teng
20		1970	(Deng Li Jun,
	(Xiao Cheng Gu Shi, 小城故事)		(Deng Li Jun, 邓丽君)
01		1070	,
21	Merlin Merlin I Love You	1978	Steven Liu
	(Mei Lan Mei Lan Wo Ai Ni, 梅兰梅兰我爱你)		(Liu Wen Zheng,
		10.00	刘文正)
22	Just As If Your Tenderness	1979	Pan An Bang
	(Qia Si Ni De Wen Rou, 恰似你的温柔)		(潘安邦)
23	The Forgotten Time	1979	Tsai Chin
	(Bei Yi Wang De Shi Guang, 被遗忘的时光)		(Cai Qin, 蔡琴)
24	Under The Banyan Tree	1979	Yu Tian
	(Rong Shu Xia, 榕树下)		(余天)
25	Sweet as Honey	1980	Teresa Teng
	(Tian Mi Mi, 甜蜜蜜)		(Deng Li Jun,
1			邓丽君)
26	God Of Wealth Arrives	1981	Steven Liu
	(Cai Shen Dao, 财神到)		(Liu Wen Zheng,
1			刘文正)
27	Daughter-in-law Returns Maternal Home	1982	Teresa Teng
	(Xiao Xi Fu Hui Niang Jia, 小媳妇回娘家)	1702	(Deng Li Jun,
1	(1. m 2. i n 1. m 1. m m g J m, J M A H XXX)		邓丽君)
28	I'm Willing	1994	Faye Wong
20		1774	
1	(Wo Yuan Yi, 我愿意)		(Wang Fei, \pm
			菲)

Table 4.3	, continued
-----------	-------------

29	Red Bean	1998	Faye Wong
	(Hong Dou, 红豆)		(Wang Fei, \pm
			菲)
30	Chrysanthemum Terrace	2006	Jay Chou
	(Ju Hua Tai, 菊花台)		(Zhou Jie Lun,
			周杰伦)
31	Blue and White Porcelain	2007	Jay Chou
	(Qing Hua Ci, 青花瓷)		(Zhou Jie Lun,
			周杰伦)

Nowadays, Classical Chinese Ensemble included a couple of Cantopop selections (Table 4.4 below) which made famous by the production of Hong Kong's Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) and a few Hokkien pop, the Taiwanese Hokkien dialect pop music (Table 4.5 below), besides a long list of *shidaiqu* and Mandopop repertoires despite not commonly performed. In the above mentioned birthday event (refer to Figure 4.5), the seldom performed genres – Cantopop (e.g., *Bless You*) and Hokkien pop (e.g., *You Have To Fight To Win*) were played in the first half of event, then the second set was continued with predominantly Mandarin popular music such as the *shidaiqu* (e.g., *Rose, Rose, I Love You*). The whole performance contained solely of Chinese popular music with a brief intermission in between for photograph session. Generally, the songs were comprised of cha-cha and rumba styles which commonly found in Chinese oldies.

Furthermore, two veteran members, Bryan and Ngooi revealed that in fact they were unfamiliar particularly with the Hokkien popular songs as compared to the all-familiar Mandarin popular music. This was due to the client's special request. They were also unable to remember the repertoires' name and had to refer to music scores when being interviewed by the researcher. This showed that *shidaiqu* and Mandarin popular music remained the most performed genre throughout the decade of their playing experience in the ensemble as in Dama Asia Production.

No.	Title	Year	Singer
1	From The Heart Of A Loafer	1976	Samuel Hui
1		1970	
	(Long Zi Sam Seng, 浪子心声)		(Hui Koon Kit, 许冠
		1000	杰)
2	The Bund	1980	Frances Yip
	(Seung Hoi Tan, 上海滩)		(Yip Lai Yee, 叶丽
			仪)
3	Night Breeze	1984	Sally Yeh
	(Man Fong, 晚风)		(Yip Sin Man,
			叶倩文)
4	Time And Tide	1985	Terence Choi
	(Shun Lau Yik Lau, 顺流逆流)		(Choi Kwok Kuen,
			蔡国权)
5	Sweet Words	1987	Sally Yeh
	(Tin Yun Mat Yu, 甜言蜜语)		(Yip Sin Man,
			叶倩文)
6	Love And Passion	1988	Liza Wang
	(Man Sui Ching San Zong Shi Qing, 万水千山		(Wong Ming Chuen,
	总是情)		汪明荃)
7	Blue Sea Laughter	1990	James Wong
	(Chong Hoi Yat Sing Siu, 沧海一声笑)		(Wong Jim, 黄沾)
8	A Man Should Stand Strong	1991	George Lam
	(Nam Yi Dong Ji Keung, 男儿当自强)		(Lam Chi Cheung,
	×		林子祥)

Table 4.4: Popular Cantopop selections

Table 4.5: Popular Hokkien pop selections

No.	Title	Year	Singer
1	Longing For The Spring Breeze	1933	Sun Sun
	(Bang Chun Hong, 望春风)		(Chun Chun, 纯纯)
2	Cheers	1986	Ye Qi Tian
	(Gan Jit Pui, 干一杯)		(叶启田)
3	You Have To Fight To Win	1988	Ye Qi Tian
	(Ai Pia Jia Eh Yia, 爱拼才会赢)		(叶启田)
4	Wife	2003	Jody Chiang or Jiang Hui
	(Gei Ao, 家后)		(Kang Hui, 江蕙)

Audience's demonstration of positive responses towards the familiar *shidaiqu*, Mandarin popular music and Cantonese popular music was seen as they applauded and cheered while their favourite songs being played in the birthday event. During the performance, two customers came to the researcher to make songs' request as they thought researcher was a member of the group. An elderly man had requested Li Xianglan's *If Only We Met Before I Married*. Although the researcher was not familiar with this song, he promised that the musicians are familiar to this "old" song regardless of their willingness to accept the request. At most of the time, audience focused on eating while listening to live music; some walked around to chat with each other; and the others looked at the performance. Although it seemed the music performance acted as the background music for the event, it served to remind and to induce nostalgic feeling among the older Chinese audience and perhaps a new setting to revive Chinese golden oldies.

Each musician employed different roles to play in a song. Their playing styles resembled a little to the Western music bands: *dizi, paixiao* and *erhu* acted as lead vocals, guzheng as keyboard, while zhongruan as bass guitar and percussion. Dizi and *paixiao* mainly played melody lines so they have limited roles in accompanying other instruments due to small range of sound and at a higher register; *erhu* took turn to play both melody and harmony parts with other instruments; guzheng is more versatile as it was covering the melodies, chords, harmony parts and giving pulses; *zhongruan* has the lowest register of sound where it provided beats and bass lines for the ensemble. The overall dynamic was controlled carefully as members gave way to the loudest melody instruments to be the focus point of the music. The team followed the lead of guzheng in all songs. It usually introduced the piece of music together with *zhongruan*. Next, the *dizi* or *paixiao* and *erhu* joined in to play the melody parts. Members listened to each other and coordinated among themselves by looking at Lam for cues especially at the beginning and the ending phrases of songs. Sometimes when instrumentalist was not sure about its part especially the unfamiliar music, the lead nevertheless remained calm and filled in the accompaniment part until his member joined in again.

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【 大王叫我来巡山 】
1 = C 歌手:赵英俊 词:赵英俊 中速 电影《万万没想到:西游篇》片尾曲 曲:赵英俊
<u>6 i i 6</u> i 5 i i · 2 0 0 (<u>i i 5 i i i 5 i</u>) 大王 叫我来 巡山
: <u>5 5 5 5 563</u> 5 - <u>6 5 3 2 236</u> 1 - [€] <u>6 · 1</u> <u>6 5 6 · 1</u> <u>6 5 5 5</u> 太阳对我 眨眼 睛 鸟儿唱歌 给我 听 我 是 一个 努力 干 活还
6555 13 2 - 55555563 35·3 3 665 633231·1 不沾人的 小妖精 别问我从哪里来 也 别问我 哪里去 1
$ \begin{array}{c} \frac{2}{6} \cdot \underline{\dot{i}} & \underline{655} \\ \underline{655} & \underline{661} & 6 & \underline{\dot{5555}} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 \\ \underline{355} & \underline{661} & 6 & \underline{\dot{5555}} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{661} & 6 & \underline{\dot{5555}} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{665} & \underline{661} & 6 & \underline{\dot{5555}} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{665} & \underline{661} & 6 & \underline{5555} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{355} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{355} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{355} & \underline{555} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & \underline{355} & \underline{355} & \underline{555} & \underline{52} ^{\underline{e}1} \cdot \underline{6} & & 0 & 0 & \\ \underline{355} & $
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<u>6365635 56356</u> <u>6365635 12323</u>) <u>6365635 56356</u> 6 0) D.S1 及思報 2016年2月24日

Figure 4.8: Printed sheet music (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra).

An example of music score entitled *King Told Me To Patrol The Mountain (Da Wang Jiao Wo lai Xun Shan*, 大王叫我来巡山) was illustrated in Figure 4.8 above. It was used during the birthday function. The score was written in cipher notation (*Jianpu*, 简谱) which was commonly used in conventional Chinese orchestra. However, the musicians often searched their own music scores from the internet without depending on the company. It consisted of numbered notations showed only the melody lines and lyrics. Therefore interestingly, musicians had to improvise and to add their own

harmony sections to produce rich sound in which the adoption of Western approach in Chinese orchestral playing was not conventional.

In addition, Bryan and Ngooi disclosed that Lam was among the most skilful musicians who created his own style of playing by adding chords and improvisations on the Chinese instrument where these skills were unusual in playing traditional Chinese music. Bryan also shared his accumulated years of performing experience in Regal Orchestra provided opportunities to learn and to master improvisation skill where he first learned to harmonize was by "feeling" through his *erhu* playing. This showed that the features of versatility and creativity in musicians were required in order to improve and to upgrade the traditional Chinese performance through innovation and professionalism in order to attract more audience for its sustainability (Tan, 2000).

4.4.2 Fusion Band

Fusion band (中西融合乐队) was established right after the Chinese Classical Ensemble in the same year in 2003. It was inspired and started out with a keyboard which Lam bought one day which he loved the rich sounds produced by this electronic Western instrument. Perhaps this feature of potentially attracting a bigger audience made it a factor for Lam to form a new ensemble with Western element. Thereafter, Lam introduced a pianist to join his Chinese ensemble where he created the name "fusion" to classify for the addition of Western instrument into the Chinese group. Since then, there were gradually more Western instruments being incorporated into the Fusion Band. Several additions of instruments in 2003 were drum set, guitar, cello, saxophone and so forth. Although the band gained its name, it was not entirely constructed by a different group of performers; instead, it was mixing the new members who played Western instruments with the same members from the Chinese Classical Ensemble. Thus, Regal Orchestra members may not stick to only one type of group and they may collaborate with each other to form Fusion Band according to each function.

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Lam shared that when back then this band was firstly introduced to the clients, he had to slowly persuade them to accept the fusion concept. This was due to his majority of older customers were more inclined to traditional and conventional style of Chinese orchestral band. Hence, his publicity tactics in promoting the band involving all the hard work by making calls to gather the group of musicians to record music demos, adding keyboard sound into the music playing and then recorded through video camera, showing and demonstrating the real live performances to prospective clients and so forth. Nowadays, the social media technology advancement no longer needed him to do so as an internet or a website link such as from the "Youtube" and "Facebook" had granted him a convenient way to address broader range of audience.

The structure of Fusion Band was more creative, diverse and varied than Chinese Classical Ensemble due to a number of factors such as more number of musicians were employed which determined an increased group size, the combination of Chinese and Western instruments used, selections between Chinese and Western musical styles and traditional or modern costume choices to suit client preference according to the event's theme. It was popularly performed for Chinese New Year celebration, Chinese festivals, corporate dinner function, shopping centre, event's opening ceremony and so forth. However, there was an extraordinary event in year 2011 where an all-Chinese Fusion band performed for a wedding of a Malay couple (Figure 4.9). Hence, a change of long-sleeved *samfu* from the originally more revealing *cheongsam* was adapted for the female musicians to respect the culture of the Malay ethnic group.



Figure 4.9: Fusion Band performed for Malay's wedding (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2011).

Fusion band played the same list of Chinese orchestral pieces dated from 1930s to late 1950s and the China's folk songs from the Qing and Ming dynasties (refer to Table 4.2), as well as *shidaiqu* and Mandopop (Table 4.3) as the Chinese Classical Ensemble, but less on the Cantopop (Table 4.4) and the least on Hokkien pop (Table 4.5). For example, the popular Chinese festival repertoires such as *Golden Snake Dance* and *Fengyang Flower Drum* but in fuller sound, texture and beats due to the accompaniment of Western keyboard and percussion pad. In general, the drum beats were in cha-cha style to suit the classical Chinese songs, whereas the keyboard provided the chords and harmony parts. These songs were frequently played in fast tempo with loud and lively drum beats to create joyous atmosphere suited for celebrations. The addition of drums occasionally like the *tanggu* and *shigu* further enhance the festive atmosphere. Besides, English songs were sometimes incorporated upon customer's request and vocalist was also joined in the band nowadays to sing most of the *shidaiqu*, Mandopop and English songs which can be termed as Fusion live Band. Table 4.6 below catalogues the possible combinations between Chinese and Western instruments in Fusion Band.

No. of Types	Name of Instruments		
2	Guzheng and ukulele		
	Erhu and acoustic guitar		
	Dizi and keyboard		
3	Dizi, voice and keyboard		
	Erhu, voice and keyboard		
	Erhu, keyboard and bass guitar		
	Guzheng, violin and keyboard		
	Guzheng, acoustic guitar and electronic percussion pad		
4	<i>Erhu</i> , voice, keyboard and bass guitar		
	Erhu, pipa, voice and keyboard		
	Erhu, dizi, keyboard and electronic percussion pad		
	Guzheng, erhu, pipa and flute		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi and bass guitar		
5	Erhu, pipa, voice, keyboard and electronic percussion pad		
	Erhu, dizi, voice, keyboard and drum set		
	Erhu, dizi, voice, keyboard and bass guitar		
	Erhu, zhongruan, voice, keyboard and bass guitar		
	Erhu, voice, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, keyboard and drum set		
6	Erhu, pipa, voice, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad		
	Erhu, voice, keyboard, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and drum set		
	Erhu, dizi, voice, keyboard, bass guitar and drum set		
	Erhu, dizi, voice, keyboard, cello and drum set		
	Guzheng, erhu, voice, violin, keyboard and drum set		
	Guzheng, erhu, pipa, yangqin, violin and flute		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, pipa, zhongruan and violin		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, voice, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad		
• •	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, voice, electronic percussion pad and drum set		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, tanggu, keyboard and bass guitar		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad		
	Guzheng, erhu, sheng, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion		
	pad		
<i>Guzheng</i> , <i>pipa</i> , flute, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percuss			
	pad		
	<i>Erhu</i> , <i>yangqin</i> , voice, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion		
	pad		
7	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, voice, keyboard, cello and electronic percussions		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, violin, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic		
	percussion pad		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, keyboard, bass guitar, drum set and tanggu		

Table 4.6: Combination of instruments in Fusion Band

Table	4.6,	continued
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8	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, pipa, zhongruan, sheng, keyboard and electronic
	percussion pad
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, pipa, keyboard, bass guitar, drums and electronic
	percussion pad
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, zhongruan, yangqin, keyboard, drums and
	electronic percussion pad
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, pipa, zhongruan, yangqin, voice and cello

Majority of the combinations included keyboard and electronic percussion pad to produce a richer harmonization and to give strong pulses and lively rhythms to accompany the Chinese instruments such as *Guzheng*, *erhu*, *dizi*, *pipa* and so forth. Lam told that he found keyboard was a powerful Western instrument capable of merging with many Chinese instruments including *guzheng* and *erhu* to produce pleasant sounds back then. However, this required experimentation blending between the Western and Chinese instruments to see whether they were suitable of combining with each other in the band. Furthermore, modern electronic percussion pad was chosen instead of a conventional Western drum set due to its small size and convenience in carrying around. Nowadays, the fusion and modern concept incorporated among the musical bands are common in Malaysia as the market shifted towards a younger generation where the popularized art forms were well accepted.

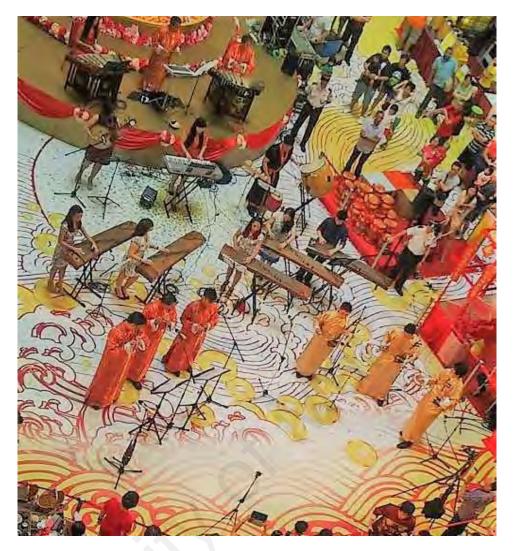


Figure 4.10: Large-scale Fusion Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2015).

The above Figure 4.10 expresses a larger version of Fusion band made up of 17 musicians performing at 1 Utama Shopping Centre during Chinese New Year, in 2015 as compared to the usual small-scale Chinese ensemble. Musicians lined up and in four rows playing instruments from the east and west – *dizi* and *erhu* (first row from the front); *guzheng* (second row); *zhongruan*, keyboard and drums (third row); *yangqin* and electronic percussion pad (fourth row). The blown and bowed instruments (*dizi* and *erhu*) playing mostly melodies are often positioned together; whereas plucked instruments (*guzheng*, *zhongruan* and *yangqin*) and percussion (electronic percussion pad) or drums (*tanggu*) that producing harmonies and rhythms respectively are placed next to each other. Importantly, the selection of loud and lively Chinese New Year

music is a requisite in Chinese cultural festival. Traditional Chinese costumes especially in red, yellow or golden are also a common representation of good fortune and prosperity (Lim & Corrie, 2006) in this festive season.

Fusion Band can be expressed as a creative and modern version of Chinese Classical Ensemble as it allowed the addition of new elements and thus created more possibilities outside the conventional framework. Interestingly, confluence of East and West was demonstrated by the Fusion Band in the following crossover performance (in Figure 4.11 below) where it smoothly joined a Cantonese and an English song together. The two songs are played in ABA sequence, starting with the Cantonese one, *A Man Should Stand Strong* then to the popular English song, *Bad Romance* and connecting back to *A Man Should Stand Strong* again. The Cantonese song was well known as Master Wong Feihung's theme music among the global Chinese communities; whereas the English song sung by popular artist, Lady Gaga was placed in Billboard top 100 which was famous around the world. This method refreshed the overly familiar tunes which appealed to a wider audience – Chinese and English-educated communities. Furthermore, the merging of two different cultures had provided a platform for mutual understanding and to revive the "odl" in a modern context.



Figure 4.11: Fusion Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2011).

In addition, most players were standing instead of sitting to imitate the popular band style. Both *erhu* and *dizi* players had also walked to the front of stage while playing their instruments before the song ended. This showed that the band had moved away from the conventional sitting- or standing-only traditional Chinese ensemble. On the other hand, musicians wore customized and standardized colour of costumes which corresponded to the event's theme "Shanghai Tang" – the once popular old Shanghai period of time and the origin of *shidaiqu*. Men dressed in a golden one-piece long gown with a white scarf and hat; women clothed in white knee-length *cheongsam* as compared to the usual red traditional Chinese costume. In fact, white in Chinese is a colour for death and mourning (Horn, Hsu, McCunn, Lai, Leung, Louie & McClaim, 1999) which do not suit the traditional Chinese ensemble and hence, it was used in the modernized ensemble.

4.4.3 Live Band / Pop Band



Figure 4.12: Live Band in 2005 (Regal Orchestra, 2011).

Live Band, sometimes known as Pop Band was created in the same year of 2003 apart from the longest-existing Classical Chinese Ensemble and Fusion Band. Figure 4.12 displays one of the earliest Live Band performed in year 2005. The name of band was used interchangeably with Fusion Band occasionally as it also employed Chinese and Western instruments which known as Fusion Live Band. However, the difference between them was that the vocalist was used for most of the time in Live Band and the employment of mainly Western instruments; whereas Fusion Band usually fused different types of instruments in a performance especially between Chinese instruments and Western instruments. Thereby, the possible structural variations of the band that involved the voice are listed as below (in Table 4.7).

No. of Types	Name of Instruments
2	Voice and keyboard
3	Voice, <i>dizi</i> and keyboard
	Voice, erhu and keyboard
	Voice, keyboard and acoustic guitar
	Voice, keyboard and bass guitar
4	Voice, erhu, keyboard and bass guitar
	Voice, <i>erhu</i> , <i>pipa</i> and keyboard
	Voice, saxophone, keyboard and bass guitar
	Voice, violin, keyboard and acoustic guitar
	Voice, keyboard, acoustic guitar and percussion
5	Voice, Erhu, pipa, keyboard and electronic percussion pad
	Voice, Erhu, dizi, keyboard and drum set
	Voice, Erhu, dizi, keyboard and bass guitar
	Voice, keyboard, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and drum set
	Voice, erhu, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad
6	Voice, erhu, pipa, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad
	Voice, erhu, keyboard, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and drum set
	Voice, erhu, dizi, keyboard, bass guitar and drum set
	Voice, erhu, dizi, keyboard, cello and drum set
	Voice, guzheng, erhu, violin, keyboard and drum set
	Voice, guzheng, erhu, dizi, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad
	Voice, guzheng, erhu, dizi, electronic percussion pad and drum set
	Voice, <i>erhu</i> , <i>yangqin</i> , keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad
7	Voice, guzheng, erhu, dizi, keyboard, cello and electronic percussions
8	Voice, guzheng, erhu, dizi, pipa, zhongruan, yangqin and cello

Table 4.7: Combination of instruments in Live Band / Pop Band

Live Band was generally played in pop style where it obtained its name as Pop Band. It was targeted at young Chinese customers where majority of them were Englishspeaking and Mandarin-speaking in comparison to the previously mentioned ensembles that attracted mainly mid-aged and older audience who were also more fluent in Cantonese and Hokkien dialect. Hence, Mandarin popular music and English popular music were accepted by the younger audience. This was what told by Tan Huey Joo (personal communication, July 2, 2016) who also played multiple Chinese and Western instruments in different bands of Regal Orchestra that each band had its own target market, especially the fusion type of live band that encompassing both Chineselanguage market and English-language market. Although Regal Orchestra was centring on the Chinese-language music, perhaps one reason of ramifying in diverse directions was for its sustainability to survive in this multilingual society.

Due to its popular musical style and dual-language song choices, a greater number of its performance was held in wedding function, birthday celebration, corporate event, restaurant event, hotel event and so forth. One example is demonstrated by the Regal Orchestra's Live Band where it was contracted to perform for four years since year 2013 at a hotel's Chinese restaurant called "Ee Chinese Cuisine" in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Its repertoires comprised of a mix between Chinese oldies and English pop music. Among these events, Chinese wedding dinner was performed the most frequent. Most of the time, Live Band was conducted in a very small-scale 1 + 1 (1 keyboard plus 1 singer), 2 + 1 (2 Western instruments plus 1 singer; 1 Chinese instrument, 1 keyboard plus 1 singer which also called 2-piece band) or 3 + 1 (3 instruments plus a vocalist also known as 3-piece band) due to cheaper rate that was more affordable for most of the young people according to Loh. Figure 4.13 below exhibits a 3-piece Fusion Live Band composed of a vocalist, keyboardist and *erhu* in year 2016.



Figure 4.13: Fusion Live Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2016).

In addition, Live band shared the similar song list of *shidaiqu* and Mandopop (refer to Table 4.3) as Fusion Band. Although the young listeners are more familiar with the current Chinese popular hits, due to numerous numbers were being covered by many popular singers nowadays, even the once out-of-fashion *shidaiqu* became well known among the public through the dissemination of electronic media such as radio, television and internet. For example, Zhou Xuan's *When Will You Come Again* in 1937 was popularized by Teresa Teng in 1977 and was covered again as popular mainstream by Claire Kuo in recent year of 2013. Hence, *shidaiqu* and Mandopop were still popularly selected among the events of young customers.

During its early formation, English repertoires were not commonly requested and thus less performed in the band. However, the most frequently performed English songs back then were all "evergreen" songs, for instance, *Oh Carol, Kiss Me A Lot* and *Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White* that perhaps nowadays many people did heard before. Thus, Table 4.8 in the following shows a less number of English popular selections compared to Chinese repertoires as client requested a lot of Mandarin popular music that suited the wedding's theme such as *The Moon Represents My Heart, Sweet as Honey, Rose, Rose, I Love You* and so forth. An example of a recent popular English hits for the wedding was *Marry You*.

No.	Title	Year	Singer
1	Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	1933	Tamara Drasin
2	Kiss Me A Lot (Besame Mucho)	1940	Consuelo Velazque z
3	Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White	1954	Perez Prado
4	Fly Me To The Moon (formerly known as In Other Words)	1954	Kaye Ballard
5	Oh Carol	1959	Neil Sedaka
6	L-O-V-E	1965	Nat King Cole
7	Can't Take My Eyes Off You	1967	Frankie Valli
8	Close To You	1970	Carpenters
9	Isn't She Lovely	1976	Stevie Wonder
10	Sometimes When We Touch	1977	Dan Hill
11	Have I Told You Lately	1989	Van Morrison
12	Lemon Tree	1995	Fool's Garden
13	Lucky	2008	Jason Mraz & Colbie Caillat
14	Marry You	2010	Bruno Mars
15	Photograph	2014	Ed Sheeran
16	Like I'm Gonna Lose You	2015	Meghan Trainor feat. John Legend

 Table 4.8: Popular English pop selections



Figure 4.14: Live Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra).

Figure 4.14 above represents an example of a two-person Live Band performance in Dream Maly Theatre. It was conducted in a casual way where the musicians initiated a few jokes, communicated with the audience and encouraged everyone to sing along as compared to the more formal and traditional Chinese Classical Ensemble which focused only on playing instruments. Both musicians were not only playing their respective instruments (keyboard and acoustic guitar), they were also responsible to act as singers. Interestingly, although the band composed of purely Western instruments, the selection of repertoires was centred on Mandarin popular music with the incorporation of a few *shidaiqu* rather than playing mainly English popular numbers. One major factor was to cater to the musical taste of the Mandarin-speaking middle-aged and older audience. This also represents the appreciation of young musicians in Malaysia towards their Chinese origins through continuing Chinese musical traditions despite modern and Western influences in contemporary society.

The songs chosen were all related to the romantic and love theme entitled 'A Love Story Theme Night' where the two musicians also got engaged recently. English popular songs were added to suit the preference of the English-speaking Chinese audience. Moreover, a wide range of repertoires from 1940's (eg., *Evening Primrose*) to 2015 (eg. *Long Distance, Like I'm Gonna Lose You*) and various musical styles (eg., pop, jazz, R&B, bossa nova) was performed in order to suit varying tastes in different age groups. Some repertoires were also changed from the original cha-cha rhythm to jazz. These catchy music and popular tunes resonated with the audience as some was seen singing and tapping along with the songs. A man aged above 50 even walked to the front of stage to compliment both musicians for making "good sounds" for innovative bossa nova style of *The Moon Represents My Heart*. Therefore, not only the young appreciates the tradition; the old people too value the "new and young".

Performance was conducted in the common sequence of 45 minutes of first set, followed by 30 minutes intermission and 45 minutes of second set. Both musicians accompanied each other when either one of them was singing melody lines. Keyboardist provided chords, harmony parts, pre-programmed drum beats and drum fill-ins; whereas the guitarist was responsible for guitar fill-ins and other accompaniment sections. They coordinated among themselves with eye contacts and by confirming the next song after a song ended, checking the first chord used before paying, backing each other up when one of them seemed uncertain, announcing who sang the next song and so forth. All music scores were obtained from online internet where the musicians only prepared lyrics on tablet computer rather than the musical notations.



Figure 4.15: Jazz Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2011).

Jazz Band (爵士乐队) was formed in the year of 2006 about three years since the inception of Regal Orchestra. Figure 4.15 above shows one of the earliest formations of Jazz Band. It is similar to the Live Band in terms of the popular English selections (Table 4.8) due to most events were performed for the wedding dinner function, birthday celebration, corporate dinner event, anniversary celebration, restaurant and hotel event except that the Jazz Band was played in Jazz musical style. This band was formed due to the availability of human talent – Jazz keyboardist – which was recognized as the utmost important criterion in forming this musical group. Figure 4.16 below displays an example of Jazz Band in year 2010 with all non-Chinese instruments including voice, saxophone keyboard, Cajon, bongos and percussion.



Figure 4.16: Jazz Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra,

2010).

Lam revealed that the band could be formed even with only one Jazz keyboardist who performed as a solo. In every performance, Jazz keyboardist must be presented in its group due to the provision of Jazz chords. Besides, saxophone and double bass were also usually found in the group. Jazz Band followed the overall form of Live Band where the biggest difference between them was the musical style. In a pure Jazz Band, there was a ninety percent of Jazz feeling in contrast to the pop style playing in the Live Band. Table 4.9 illustrates possible combination of instruments used in Jazz Band where the existence of keyboard is shown in every combination.

Regal Orchestra Jazz Bands				
No. of Types	Name of Instruments			
3	Voice, keyboard and acoustic guitar			
	Voice, keyboard and bass guitar			
	Keyboard, saxophone and double bass			
4	Electric guitar, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic drum set			
	Voice, saxophone, keyboard and bass guitar			
	Voice, violin, keyboard and acoustic guitar			
	Voice, keyboard, acoustic guitar and percussion			

Table 4.9: Combination of instruments in Jazz band

5 Voice, keyboard, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and drum set
--

The pure Western instrumental band such as Jazz Band has less instrumental combination as compared to other Chinese music-related bands in Regal Orchestra due to Chinese music was the main focus in this Regal Orchestra. In fact, the band seldom performed with entirely Jazz repertoires and purely Western instruments. Apart from the English popular repertoires (refer to Table 4.8) that was generally performed, Jazz band also played a lot of Chinese repertoires such as the musical genre of *shidaiqu* and Mandopop (from Table 4.3). It could include either with or without a vocalist. Often times, the name of Fusion Jazz Band was utilized instead when Chinese element was added into the band such as a Chinese instrument and a Chinese singer joined in the Jazz Band or on the other way round, a Jazz keyboardist accompanied the Chinese ensemble.



Figure 4.17: Fusion Jazz Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2014).

Figure 4.17 above illustrates a 5+1 (5 instruments plus 1 singer) Fusion Jazz Band of Regal Orchestra in a Chinese fusion form. The band was performing *The Forgotten Time* with *erhu*, *pipa*, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic percussion pad in a mixture of a half pop and a half Jazz style. The keyboard played an important role in providing Jazz chord progressions to give the feeling of Jazz after the first half of the song played in pop style; *erhu* and *pipa* filled in with their pentatonic melody lines to create glimpse of Chinese-ness; bass guitar supported the bass lines; percussion beat only beat the second half of song with Jazz rhythms; whereas the singer sang in a calm and a low tone.

The attention of the whole performance was drawn to the female vocalist who dressed in a fitted sleeveless blue *cheongsam* and wore a flower hair piece. This resembles the phenomenon of a sing-song girl (*genu*, 歌女) who performed *shidaiqu* at nightclubs (*geting*, 歌厅) during the olden days of Shanghai in the 1930s (Chin, 2015). However, its context was shifted to a commercial setting nowadays and by the blending of Chinese instruments into the originally Western-influenced band. Perhaps the tactic used in recreating the olden days' scene through commercial method was not only to attract more customers into music business, it also served to promote Chinese cultures and traditions to Malaysian public.

4.4.5 Tang Ren Gu

As more variations were gradually added and developed throughout the years, drum group was introduced after the formation of various musical bands. *Tang Ren Gu* (唐人 鼓) which literally means "drum of the Tang people" was brought into Regal Orchestra in the year of 2006. One main reason of its formation was the availability of human talent – the drummers of *Tang Ren Gu* – after few years of the establishment of Regal Orchestra. The following Figure 4.18 showcases the earliest *Tang Ren Gu* performance

with *da tanggu* (large hall drum) and *huapen gu* (flowerpot drum) in Regal Orchestra's concert in year 2006.



Figure 4.18: *Tang Ren Gu* in year 2006 (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2010).

Back then, a friend of Lam who was majoring in percussion had just graduated from Shanghai, China and then returned to Malaysia. One day when his friend was teaching drum in the class, Lam observed him by chance and he immediately acknowledged his talent of drumming. Thereafter, Lam introduced him to join the group and perform together. His friend cooperated with Regal Orchestra at the beginning by performing a set of five tuned drum set known as *paigu* (排鼓, Chinese Tom-tom) (refer to the most left instrument in Figure 4.18).

Furthermore, more than 10 drums were imported by Lam from the drum manufacturer in Suzhou, China such as *da tanggu* (大堂鼓, large hall drum), *xiao tanggu* (小堂鼓, small hall drum), *biangu* (扁鼓, flat drum) and *huapen gu* (花盆鼓,

flowerpot drum). The name "Qian Qiu Drum Group" (千秋鼓乐团) was firstly employed. However later when his friend left the group to Johor Bahru, "Tang Ren Gu" was recommended to replace the previous name. Hence, the new name was continuously used until today. The drum scores which provided by his friend earlier was also changed and Lam tried to create and arrange his own composition.



Figure 4.19: *Tang Ren Gu* in year 2009 (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2010).

Nowadays, *Tang Ren Gu* was commonly performed for varying corporate's event such as opening ceremony, annual dinner, awards night, festival event and also for shopping mall, for instance, during the VIP guests' welcoming ceremony or as one of the performances among other programs during the event. Figure 4.19 above illustrates *Tang Ren Gu* drummers performed inside the shopping mall in 2009 while wearing colorful face masks adopted from China's traditional Sichuan Opera "*bian lian*" ($\overline{\mathcal{R}}$) face-changing) art form (Formichi, 2014). On the other hand, performers were also

dressed in costumes similar to the Japanese sleeveless *happi* (traditional vest) but in a longer version although the *tanggu* had its origin from China's Jiangzhou (Lin, 2003).

Back then, *Tang Ren Gu* performed in its own group for most of the time. Nowadays due to the growing numbers of diverse drum groups, it also collaborated with other drum groups that were available in Regal Orchestra such as the *shigu* (lion drum), LED water drum and Muhibbah drum group to form Fusion Drum performance. In fact, the drum group was hired for any occasion and was not restricted to only the Chinese events as the group depended on client's preference. However, there were a few factors to consider while negotiating with the customer in carrying out the drum performance including the space of stage, number of drum used, number of drummer, the budget of clients and style of performance. The group performed in any numbers of drum requested from four to more than ten drums as long as the client accepted. The drums were either in brown or red colour; some even had half-brown and half-red outlook.

On the other hand, drum repertoires were usually not listed out as they did not have fixed melody lines and structure as in music. Lam shared that drummers had to create new drumming patterns and movements every time they performed in a new show to not repeatedly showcase the same performance. This was due to the commercial line of cultural business that emphasized on attracting more customers with new elements. In fact, the drummer created a particular drumming rhythm and was named according to their likes or feeling. For instance, when the drumming pattern seemed delightful, the name "*Gu Yue Ren Xin*" (literally means drum music enlightens people's heart) was stated as a title. Another example of repertoire was entitled "*Lei*" (means thunder) which partially shown in the following Figure 4.20. As a matter of fact, visual appearance and loud sound produced was more important than the drum music itself. Moreover, various movements were choreographed with more variations to give a dynamic drum performance.

Figure 4.20: Notation of *Tang Ren Gu*'s repertoire (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra).

4.4.6 Muhibbah Performance

In addition to the diverse musical bands from the east and west, Malaysian local needs were catered through the supplying of Muhibbah performance services. Regal Orchestra's Muhibbah performance (大马民族元素演艺) composed of Muhibbah musical band and Muhibbah drum group where both of them were established in the year of 2006. These two groups were formed due to the presence of different ethnicities of Malaysia in which their gathering in one performance setting conveyed the message of tolerance and harmony in this multicultural society. Most performances were conducted in the event that organized by the government and corporate organization with the intention to cultivate good relationship and cooperation among distinct races. Figure 4.21 below displays a 3-ethnic Muhibbah performance using six different ethnic instruments in an exhibition participated by all government-linked companies.



Figure 4.21: Muhibbah Band and Drum Group (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2011).

Although Regal Orchestra's Muhibbah group emerged before the nation's 1Malaysia concept launched by our Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak in 2008, the group seldom performed and played in a very small group as compared to after the initiation of the campaign which had developed into a bigger group (Loo & Loo, 2016). The nation's formation of the concept served as a platform to popularize the Muhibbah performance among the Malaysian community. Thus, the main focus of Muhibbah Band and Drum Group had been aligned with the 1Malaysia ideology by emphasizing on the presentation and participation of diverse ethnicities in both musical and drum performance, specifically of the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese and Indian). Freelance musicians of other races were usually hired by Lam from outside of Regal Orchestra to collaborate with its Chinese musicians. Hence, many variations of Muhibbah performance (refer to Table 4.10) were formed due to the availability of players.

Regal Orchestra Muhibbah Performance			
No. of Types	Name of Instruments		
3	Guzheng, kompang and angklung		
4	Guzheng, dizi, tabla and bass guitar		
5	Guzheng, sheng, kompang, gong and keyboard		
	Guzheng, erhu, caklempong, sitar and tabla		
	Guzheng, caklempong, angklung, veena and tabla		
	Shigu, gendang, thavil, urumi and dhol		
6	Guzheng, sheng, angklung, gong, keyboard and percussion pad		
	Shigu, tanggu, gendang, thavil, urumi and dhol		
	Erhu, huapen gu, gendang, caklempong, thavil and bansuri		
7	Guzheng, erhu, sheng, angklung, keyboard, bass guitar and electronic		
	percussion pad		
	Guzheng, erhu, caklempong, rebana, sitar, tabla and tambourine		
12	Guzheng, erhu, yangqin, sheng, kompang, gendang, veena, tabla, dhol,		
	keyboard, acoustic guitar and bass guitar		
13	Guzheng, erhu, yangqin, sheng, veena, mridangam, urumi, dhol,		
	doumbek, keyboard, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and flute		
	Guzheng, erhu, dizi, sheng, paigu, ganggu, caklempong, veena,		
	keyboard, double bass, bongos, xylophone and percussions		

Table 4.10: Combination of instruments in Muhibbah Performance

The most frequent use of Chinese instruments in the group were *guzheng*, *erhu* and *dizi*; Malays' instruments were consisted of *caklempong* and *gendang*; whereas for Indians were commonly played on *thavil*, *bansuri*, *veena* and *sitar*. Musicians were not necessary to be familiar to every repertoire of other races as most of the time they were only accompanying each other based on the key and structure when the song played was not of their own ethnicity. Many times, they improvised in their own way and played under a fixed framework. Nonetheless, musician listened to the song first prior to playing together. Normally, every race took turn to play their own repertoires and then everyone joined together during the last one or two songs. This also applied to the drum group where each ethnic had chance to showcase itself before they all played simultaneously.

Muhibbah performance incorporated several Malay and Indian songs (see Table 4.11) apart from the well-known Chinese song such as *The Moon Represents My Heart* and *Sweet as Honey*. Government-related events often utilized repertoires from the famous Malaysian medley. For example, a couple of famous Malay folk songs comprising *Feeling Of Love, Paddle The Boat, The Swaying Of The Watercress, Come Goat Come* and *Ponyfish* were occasionally combined to become medley due to their short length and repeating melodies or they were performed separately. Among them, the most famous repertoire belonged to *Feeling Of Love* where this song was largely performed as a symbol of harmony and ethnic tolerance in this multi-ethnic country.

No.	Title	Year	Origin / Singer
1	Feeling Of Love (Rasa Sayang)	-	Malay archipelago
2	Paddle The Boat (Dayung Sampan)	-	Malay archipelago
3	The Swaying Of The Watercress (Lenggang Kangkung)	-	Malay archipelago
4	Come Goat Come (Can Mali Can)	-	Malay archipelago
5	Ponyfish (Ikan Kekek)	-	Malay archipelago
6	River Solo (Bengawan Solo)	1940	Indonesia
7	Sprinkling (Di Renjis-renjis Di Pilis, originally known as Di Renjis-renjis)	1950	Daeng Harris
8	Honey And Poison (Madu Dan Racun)	1985	Bill Brod
9	Something Or Other is Happening (Kuch Kuch Hota Hai)	1998	Udit Narayan and Alka Yagnik

Table 4.11: Popular Malay and Indian music selections

The Malay folk songs surrounded the village's theme such as village life, nature, animals, plants, family affections, friends and love. These songs were also known to the non-Malays as they were taught in most of the schools. Besides, the Indonesian song

named *River Solo* not only popular among the Malays; it had been covered by many Chinese singers including Frances Yip and Poon Sow Keng with her Mandarin version of *Suo Luo He Zhi Lian* (梭罗河之恋) which was also famous among the Chinese. Other Malay and Indian songs performed were catered to the theme of weddings, festivals (Malays' Hari Rayas and Indians' Deepavali) and corporate functions. In addition, another example was also found in a Muhibbah event under the banner of "Friendship Group for Inter-religious Service (FGIS)" which intended to foster religious tolerance among different religious groups in Malaysia through performing *The Moon Represents My Heart* and *Feeling Of Love*. The Muhibbah performance not only invoked the audience's sympathetic response, it helped strengthen understanding towards each other's culture.

In Muhibbah performance, every ethnicity played instruments of its own ethnic group while dressing in its traditional costumes with varying colours. It constituted of either music instruments or non-music instruments that played by different races. Figure 4.22 below exhibits an example of Muhibbah Drum Group without employing musical instruments. The pair of Indians playing the *urumi* and *thavil* respectively was wearing *dhoti-kurta* and turban; the Chinese *shigu* and *tanggu* players were dressed in sleeveless *happi*; the Malays who beat the *gendang* wore *baju melayu cekak musang*, *sampin*, embroidered jacket and *tengkolok*; whereas the Indian *dhol* players clothed in sleeveless *kurta-pyjana*, embroidered jacket and *pagdi* (turban). In fact, the absence of an ethnic group could be substituted, in point of fact, by distinct races where Lam played *angklung* on behalf of the Malay; a Chinese instrumentalist was clothed in Indian sari (female draped dress) while playing *guzheng* during Deepavali (the festival of lights); a pair of Malays in one Muhibbah event also wore traditional Chinese *samfus* in red performing Chinese drums to represent the particular ethnic group.



Figure 4.22: Muhibbah Drum Group (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2012).

4.4.7 LED Water Drum

LED Water Drum (水鼓) was formed around year 2012 where the concept of modernization was added into the once classical Chinese ensemble. Lam revealed that he had the idea of forming the group from the internet and during his visit to China where he saw a good opportunity in developing this kind of instrument. Later on, he purchased a few water drums from China and started to search for drummers to perform. The group of drummer was actually the same group of member who played the season drum – *shigu* such as from the Muhibbah performance. They were all hired by Lam from 24 seasons drum group outside Regal Orchestra where this traditional art form was so popular throughout the whole nation.



Figure 4.23: LED Water Drum (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2016).

Visual presentation was the most crucial emphasis especially in this LED Water Drum Group where they were frequently hired for the production of colourful visual effects and dance movements to attract audiences during the opening ceremony of corporate functions. The above Figure 4.23 presents an example of LED Water Drum performance played by a drummer who dressed in white costume to demonstrate its contemporary drumming characteristic. Besides, the addition of colourful LED and laser lighting effects at times had assisted in setting and lifting the mood for all the grand openings of event. The reception of the audience is shown in the figure as everyone surrounded at the roadside watching the performance. Most of them were of young- and mid-aged who attracted to the contemporary drum-dance.

Interestingly, the water group actually did not require a real drummer to perform; whereas a dancer was more suitable instead. This was due to the drum was not considered as a real drum that created loud sound, rather, the material of the drum produced only soft beating sounds. Hence, background music and sound effects must accompany in this kind of drum performance. The computerized animated images were sometimes used on stage performance to intensify and highlight the atmosphere. Lam made and edited the accompaniment music or sound effects all by himself through the internet such as from the "Youtube". Any elements of sound could be utilized as long as it fitted the whole performance, for example, sound of water dropping, screaming, intense sound and so forth. Therefore, there was no repertoire used in the group. Furthermore, the performance also did not follow any theme of event. Thus, drumming is generally expressed in the form of drum dance rather than focusing solely on drum music to create dynamic atmosphere. It was commonly choreographed by dance teacher with various dance steps and movements. Lam disclosed that the dance teacher firstly had to listen to the music of the performance, next was to observe the ways that the drummer beat the drum and then gradually arranged and choreographed the dance steps and movements.

LED Water Drum was in fact not frequently performed within its own group, perhaps due to lack of the spectacular loud sound as compared to other drum groups with real drum sounds produced. Furthermore, its contemporary style of performance might not appeal to older audience. Hence, the group often collaborated with lion drum (*shigu*, 狮鼓 used in 24 seasons drum) and specifically with *Tang Ren Gu* to form a hybrid drum performance in order to attract a broader audience. Table 4.12 below compiles the possible variations for the three types of drum that utilized in Regal Orchestra in which every individual drum group can be performed independently or blended with each other in response to the customer's requests.

Regal Orchestra Drum Groups	
No. of Types	Name of Drums
1	LED water drums
	Shigu
	Tanggu
2	LED water drums and tanggu
	Shigu and tanggu
3	LED water drums, shigu and tanggu

Table 4.12: Combination of drum groups

An instance of Hybrid Drum performance is shown in the 2013 Guinness World Record event that witnessing the largest capsule vending machine located at the entrance hall of Berjaya Times Square Kuala Lumpur (Figure 4.24 below). Three varying types of drums (LED water drums, *shigu* and *tanggu*) were incorporated and choreographed together for this symbolic moment. The water drums which emitted colourful LED lights were often placed in the front row to attract audience while the drummers were hitting and water splashing off the drum. Performers of this modern water drum group usually dressed in contemporary attire with more exposure of body parts compared to other drum groups. In fact, all types of drum and instrumental groups had an interrelation where they were capable of joining hands together to form hybridize performance whenever given the possibility to do so. Hence, the notion of hybridity manifested in Regal Orchestra's performances is one of the driving forces for market demands.



Figure 4.24: Hybrid Drum (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2013).

4.4.8 All Girls Crystal Band

The formal establishment of All Girls Crystal Band (女子水晶乐队) was occurring in year 2013 in addition to the similarly formed Chinese Classical Ensemble. It was an all-female and a modernized version of Chinese Classical Ensemble with the inclusion of modern element comprising the imported crystal-like Chinese instruments. The available instruments consisted of *guzheng*, *erhu*, *dizi*, *pipa*, *zhong ruan* and the Western violin where they were usually made of acrylic material instead of the real crystal.

Lam shared that he first saw these instruments in China and he bought it at once for the use of Regal Orchestra due to their pretty and transparent crystal-like appearances. Later, he only found that the instruments were already popular throughout China after searching from the internet. The overall price of these crystal-like instruments was relatively higher and Lam claimed it was a big investment in contrast to the woodenmade Chinese instruments. *Guzheng* was the most expensively bought crystal instruments which priced around RMB10000 few years ago; on the contrary, the *dizi* was the cheapest that cost RMB500; others were about RMB2000-3000. Figure 4.25 below illustrated the first show performed by the newly formed All Girls Crystal Band during the 2013 Chinese New Year. The instruments employed including *zhongruan*, *pipa*, *erhu*, *guzheng* and *dizi*.



Figure 4.25: All Girls Crystal Band in *cheongsams* (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2013).

Musicians were all Chinese female which practically took the form of the China's 12 Girls Band who pioneering the all-female Chinese band in the nation during year 2001. Later on, the emergence of another pretty girls' band in 2008 was taken over by The Girls Crystal band in the same nation. The band had performed for the first time during the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics' opening ceremony ("Huang Zi Qi Xie," 2017). Since then, the use of crystal instruments had been introduced and popularized around the world. Regal Orchestra thus utilized the opportunity to form a new crystal band. As a matter of fact, Regal Orchestra's Chinese Classical Ensemble had debuted all-girl ensemble playing on the wooden-made traditional Chinese instruments back then since year 2010 prior to the constitution of All Girls Crystal Band in 2013. This indicated that the idea was developed from the early ensemble. Figure 4.26 in the following exhibits one of the earliest Girls Band performances in year 2011 although the group do not perform as frequently as the usual classical ensemble.



Figure 4.26: Girls Band (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra,

2011).

The chance for crystal instrumental performance was considerably rare due to its high charges. Furthermore, the band was predominantly hired by the corporation and seldom by individual. Performance settings included corporate functions such as annual dinner, appreciation night, anniversary and festival. Although the repertoires performed (refer to Table 4.3) were exactly the same as the Chinese Classical Ensemble, so did the musicians who employed from the same ensemble, the band required to utilize background music when performing. For example, Sweet as Honey's karaoke music had to be played at the background to accompany the crystal instrumental playing and enhance the sound produced.

The emphasis of these instruments was its attractive appearance of blue lightemitting diodes (LEDs) and transparent body rather than its sound characteristic. Performers often had to play together in a group instead of a solo to balance and covered up the weakness of poorer sound quality. Melody lines were also taken turns to play by each instrumentalist. As visual appearance was emphasized rather than the sound itself, the performers in Figure 4.26 above wore red knee-length *cheongsams* to match the Chinese festival theme that favoured red as prosperity and good luck. Another example is shown in Figure 4.27 below where the performers dressed in elegant long dresses to suit the Western corporate function.



Figure 4.27: All Girls Crystal Band in Western costumes (Photo used with permission from Regal Orchestra, 2013).

In addition, All Girls Crystal Band was conducted by incorporating the Western and modern concepts into the originally traditional Chinese ensemble. The band adopted a change of standing pose from the conventional siting position that was commonly seen in traditional Chinese orchestra. Members were also moving along with the music to create dynamic performance by imitating the band characteristic from the West as compared to the stagnant conventional posture. Moreover, the face expressions were also exaggerated more with wide smiles to create friendly and positive atmosphere.

4.5 Transformation and Cultural Identities of Regal Orchestra

This ethnographic research that look ing into the overall development, performances and transformation of Regal Orchestra has led to the formation of theories and some afterthought regarding its cultural identities resulted from the global and local influences. The local was usually influenced by the global force as "it is increasingly difficult to find anything in the world untouched by globalization" (Ritzer, 2003, p. 207). This was due to the exposure of the local people towards the global culture which was made easy through the advent of technology, particularly the internet and the rising opportunity to tour across the globe. Thus, Regal Orchestra was influenced by the homogenizing force of globalization in the distribution of music which broadly incorporating westernization and Asianization of Asia as well as the heterogeneous force of localization which gives authorization to the local music culture (Ho, 2003).

However, Ritzer (2003) stated that what we commonly recognized as local is in fact known as the glocal. Glocalization combined between the two concepts: globalization and localization, where Robertson (1992) coined it as particularizing the universal as well as universalizing the particular. The concept of glocalization specifically adapted the global culture to the local context as the global elements were flowing and moving around the world (Ritzer, 2007). In addition, numerous combinations that formed by absorbing varying global cultural elements into the local culture were more likely to cause to cultural heterogeneity or cultural blending which termed as hybridization (Pieterse, 1994) and creolization (Hannerz, 1992). As a matter of fact, Hannerz stated that every culture was a mixture or was creolized (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the rising globalization also implied the growing of hybridization as further openness of the local

was allowed for the impacts of other cultures. Figure 4.28 below shows the possible influences conducted on Regal Orchestra's diverse musical bands and drum groups.

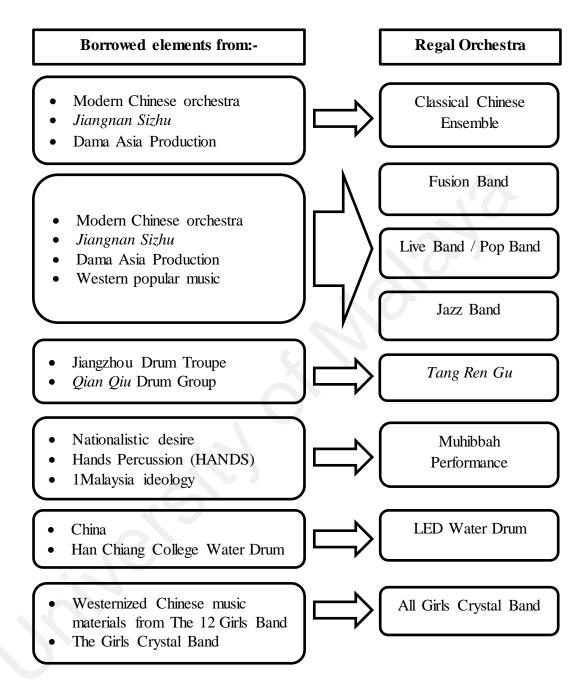


Figure 4.28: Regal Orchestra and its influences

In this multicultural nation, Regal Orchestra embraced multiple identities through performing as Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Malaysian and global citizen in its diverse performances. As Tan (2007) emphasized the non-homogenous identity of Chinese diaspora in Malaysia since they shifted and changed their identities in accordance with the surrounding socio-political circumstances. During the early years when the Chinese emigrated from mainland China to Malaysia, they were strongly attached to their homeland culturally and emotionally. Thus, many folk performing arts were brought over to Malaysia by the Chinese ancestors. The modern Chinese orchestra was one of the traditional art forms originated from China where the early formation of Regal Orchestra was based on, alongside with the use of traditional Chinese instruments as the core instruments in most of its musical bands. Although the Chinese citizens who are born in Malaysia nowadays do not recognize themselves as the Chinese descendants of China, many of them still looked towards and borrowed Chinese elements from its origin as well as from other Chinese-dominated countries such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. To name a few examples such as the China's *tanggu* and *shidaiqu*, Hong Kong's Cantopop and Taiwan's Hokkien pop.

In addition, Regal Orchestra is performing as Malaysian Chinese by stressing its Chinese identity as an expression of distinctiveness among other non-Chinese performing arts in this multiracial country since the execution of the 1970s' cultural policies that challenged towards the Chinese community. This required the group to emphasize its Chinese-ness through the use of traditional Chinese instrumentation, Chinese popular music and traditional Chinese costumes in its performances. However, the shifting of identity between a Chinese and a Malaysian Chinese demanded interaction and negotiation with other ethnicities in this nation (Tan, 2000). Hence, due to the intercultural exchanges that led to the incorporation of glocalization concept in this commercial nature group, changes such as the invented traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983) were formed to accommodate the needs of the local customers through tailoring global elements to meet the distinct local interests.

First of all, the small-scale ensembles were generally conducted in Regal Orchestra as compared to the conventional large-scale Chinese orchestra as exemplified by Dama Asia Production which downsized its Chinese orchestra from twenty-four to six members for the sustainability of its organization. Furthermore, Regal also continued the trend of employing Chinese popular music particularly *shidaiqu* and Mandarin popular music after Dama as a major component of its Chinese popular selections. This was to glocalize by reviving the once out-of-fashion Chinese golden oldies that originated from China in the local Chinese market through commercial context which contrasting with the common use of classical orchestral pieces and Chinese folk songs in the conventional Chinese orchestra.

In fact, *shidaiqu* was once associated with the yellow culture (*huangse wenhua*) that mentioned by Jones (2001) as it was performed by sing-song girl (*genii*) who socialized at nightclubs (*getting*) on Western instrumentation in the later old Shanghai days. However, in Regal Orchestra, it was transformed into a different function and recognized as a newly invented tradition that signifies a Malaysian Chinese cultural identity. For example, *Evening Primrose* was played on Chinese instrumentation during an anniversary dinner function of a transnational corporation which symbolized a Malaysian Chinese performance that entertained and celebrated the company's anniversary rather than a sing-song performance from China with the use of Western instruments. It was not only representing and symbolizing the local Chinese community but also played a pivotal role in inducing nostalgia especially among the older Chinese audience by bringing back memories of their school days (Loo & Loo, 2014). Apart from *shidaiqu*, the other types of Chinese popular music including Mandopop, Cantopop and Hokkien pop were glocalized and adapted into the Chinese instrumental ensemble to serve different dialect groups of Chinese in Malaysia.

As China's influence had been exerted its culture on the Chinese orchestra in Malaysia since the 1960s when the musicians studied there (Tan, 2000), it continued until today in the glocalized context of Regal Orchestra. This was exemplified by the addition of *Tang Ren Gu* in 2006 into the originally a classical Chinese musical

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ensemble which formed after the Johor Bahru's Qian Qiu Drum Group. Both groups used the structural form and borrowed drum instrumentation such as da tanggu, xiao tanggu, biangu, huapen gu and so forth from China's Jiangzhou Drum Troupe. It appeared to be one of the earliest Chinese folk drum groups in China where the villagers used to play drums as their daily activity to celebrate and to pass time after work (Lin, 2003). Nowadays, Regal transformed its function and adapted locally as its performance was mostly choreographed for the event's opening ceremony in Malaysia. Often times, Tang Ren Gu was glocalized and combined with other types of drums to suit the local client preference. For instance, tanggu blended in with the Malay and Indian drums in Muhibbah performance which signified the Malaysian Chinese identity. It also joined together with shigu and water drum to perform hybridized local drum performance. The hybridity concept is thus adopted in this drum group as it incorporated not only the Sichuan opera face mask, but also the Japanese costumes and Taiko drumming. Hence, Tang Ren Gu acted as a continuity of Chinese tradition with the glocalized Malaysian identity through its commodification as a hybrid cultural product in this non-Chinesedominated country.

On the other hand, as Ho (2003) remarked that the Western influence as a significant part of globalization, various elements from the West have brought into the glocalized performance of Regal Orchestra. For instance, the Western mainstream popular culture, English popular music, Jazz music, Western instrumentation, all-female band and so forth. Hence, this led to localized globalism (Lemos, 2011) in Regal where it reacted through applying the concept of hybridity by establishing diverse types of musical bands and drum groups. For example, the formation of Fusion Band that blended the Western instruments into the Chinese ensemble as well as to perform a mixture of Chinese and English popular music intends to blur the boundary and stressed on the inbetweenness (Pieterse, 1994); the African American's Jazz music that diffused globally was now glocalized and amalgamated its Jazz rhythm and chords with Chinese popular music on mostly Western instruments; Live Band or Pop Band originated from the mainstream popular culture of the West covers both English and Chinese popular music in pop musical style on mainly Western instruments. These fundamental types of musical bands could again be structured and restructured to form various combinations in order to comply with the local consumers of different age group, language speaking and race (*ibid.*). For instance, Fusion Jazz band from the blending of Fusion Band and Jazz Band was glocalized for the younger Malaysian Chinese audience with Jazz preference; Fusion Live band suited the young to mid-aged Chinese- or Englishspeaking Malaysian. Moreover, the hybridity of Regal Orchestra was also showed through performing the same piece of *shidaiqu* in any musical genre and in all types of its musical bands including classical band, fusion band, live band, jazz band and crystal band.

Apart from the identity as a Malaysian Chinese cultural group, Regal Orchestra's nationalistic desire for performing as Malaysian is shown through the forming of Muhibbah performance that attended to different local ethnicities. As Gabriel (2010) highlighted the outdated national assumption that often overlooked the new and the essential shifting needs of the local diaspora communities who highly yearn for national belonging while falsely focused only on the rootedness of their ancestry, Regal Orchestra thereby demonstrated multiculturalism in its hybrid performances to symbolize its national identity. Perhaps, this was also to avoid the norm of perceiving Regal Orchestra as a music organization that belonged and catered only to a single ethnicity – the Chinese community of this nation. Although musicians of different races, mainly Chinese, Malay and Indian, played instruments of its own ethnic group for most of the time, the hybridity of the multicultural performance was illustrated by taking turns to play Chinese, Malay and Indian music on all of the varying music

instrumentation. This is similar to the conceptualisation of the Malaysian Hands Percussion (HANDS) which did not intend to produce a Chinese only but a Malaysian drum group (Jotsna, 2015). Therefore, Regal Orchestra's formation of Muhibbah concept was in line with and further strengthened by the nation's 1 Malaysia ideology in promoting ethnic harmony and tolerance from a Malaysian perspective.

Regal Orchestra's glocalization of Chinese elements into a multicultural context represented a Malaysian identity instead of a Malaysian Chinese identity. This allowed more opportunities and privileges to perform in government-related settings and multiracial functions since the heightened slogan of ethnic tolerance was popularized by the government. As according to Lei (2015), Malaysian Chinese orchestra seldom obtained the platform to perform at the national official occasions where they only performed at private settings or in schools for most of the time. In addition, the healthy culture (*jiankang wenhua*) that promoted close friendship among different races of musicians was in line with the political tolerance concept as Regal employed its non-Chinese musicians from the multicultural performance setting. Hence, by glocalizing to multi-ethnic audience and packaging itself as part of the Malaysian national emblem, Regal differed itself from the conventional Chinese orchestra that reaching only a limited range of audience.

Moreover, Regal Orchestra is performing as global identity through the global use of internet and social media. The all-female concept of musical band was originated from the West and then being westernized and glocalized in China. According to Gonick (2008), although Girl Power brought the message of gender equality and feminism, it became a money-making concept that was exploited for its commercial benefit. This was what Ritzer (2007) termed as the glocalization of nothing or grobalization of nothing due to the loss of meaning in its cultural product. In the West, Spice Girl exemplified the phenomenon of grobalization of nothing; whereas in China, this could

be represented by the 12 Girls Bands which intended to fit into the global popular music scene (Jing, 2010).

This idea of syncretism that utilized the global influence from the East and West was borrowed by Regal Orchestra for its commercial use. The formation of its All Girls Crystal Band was preceded by the all-female Classical Chinese Ensemble which employs Westernized Chinese music elements from the 12 Girls Band. It was then incorporated with crystal-like acrylic instruments from The Girls Crystal Band. In fact, its invention was to popularize among the Western, young and perhaps male audience as female musicians were dressed in fitted Chinese costumes that invite male gaze in which Mulvey (1975) shared that male gaze fantasized and visualized the female character as the object of providing certain entertainment services. Besides, the group also intended to fit into the mainstream popular music market globally as compared to the conventional Chinese ensemble that attracted a small local audience.

In addition, the LED Water Drum took the same approach as crystal band to draw in more attention of the contemporary audience which opposed to the traditional performing arts that focus on the conventional market. Its modern feature was unlike the traditional drum groups such as 24 seasons drum that emphasizing mostly on its drumming and real sound production; instead, water drum performance stressed more on its visual effects and used computerized sound effects. As Jameson (1985) mentioned that the consumer's trend towards visual culture in the commercial industry was inevitable and thus the focus points were crucially stressed on the colourful visual appearance, bizarre and short-length performance. Hence, Regal Orchestra is performing as global cultural performance group through the wide spread use of internet as the group was also being introduced to the water drum from the China's websites. Perhaps, it was also formed under the influence of the Malaysia's first water drum performance which demonstrated by the Penang's Han Chiang College during the

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Golden Achievement Awards (GAA) in year 2011 ("Han Yuan Jin Fan," 2011). Moreover, the group served not to be categorized under any ethnicities but a type of contemporary drum-dance that catered for both local and global audiences.

As a result, huayue tuan had progressed towards professionalism through Westernized and modernized performance with the addition of new repertoires since the 1990s and commercialization, commodification and globalization became prevailing in Chinese orchestra since 2001 due to modern technology advancement (Yang & Saffle). Regal Orchestra continued to borrow and adopt these concepts including glocalization and hybridity in adapting global elements into the local markets. On the one hand, the social function that once promoted healthy culture (jiankang wenhua) to combat against yellow culture (huangse wenhua) was gradually disappeared due to commercial needs in the contemporary society (Wong, 2017). Although various challenges faced in the developmental and transformational process of the group such as financial issue that always encountered by self-supported Chinese orchestras due to lack of governmental provision (Lei, 2015), measurement between the new and traditional elements, satisfying the client's "fusion" need, for example, the request of standing and movable erhu player, absence of professional composer and music arranger as well as reducing number of customers due to competitive market. Regal maintained its multiple identities of performing as Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Malaysian and global performing group to prevent elimination from the global and local society (Su, 2014).

Therefore, Regal Orchestra demonstrated its in-betweenness by taking the form of commercialized Chinese music "one stop centre" through commodifying the hybridity of its musical bands and drum groups as localized globalization. It divided its focus by emerging through small-scale ensembles with local and global freelances in comparison to the large-scale conventional Chinese orchestra compacted with a lot of members. In addition, Regal cultivated its own human talent from KeeJan Music School apart from

hiring professional musicians from the outside which differed from the other professional Chinese orchestras, for instance, the Children Chinese Classical Ensemble constituting primary school-aged students performed in commercial setting to gain experience and to polish their musical skills. As according to Lei (2015), many Chinese orchestras from educational setting although popular within the nation are in fact barely functioned beyond the school's extra-curricular activity due to lack of governmental subsidy, concern from the public and platform for its continuity. Hence, Regal Orchestra played a significant role in preserving its Chinese and Malaysian identities through glocalized, hybridized, commercialized and commodified its local culture in this multi-ethnic country, alongside with cultivating the young generation to appreciate its multicultural tradition.

4.6 Conclusion

The formation, development, organization, music performances, repertoires, function, issues, transformation and cultural identities of Regal Orchestra had been explored and discussed in order to answer all of the research questions in this study. The idea of creating diverse, fusion and hybrid performances in Regal Orchestra through providing numerous selections of music was one remedy to curb all of the issues that were faced by the conventional Chinese orchestra as it received less attention from the non-Chinese community and younger generation of Chinese people in Malaysia. In addition, the once significant social function of Malaysian Chinese orchestra had also been transformed into the popular and commercial use of Chinese-related bands and drum groups in this contemporary society.

Thus, the establishment of different live bands and groups in order to cater to varying needs of Malaysian community were such that: Chinese Classical Ensemble that emphasized on cha-cha and rumba style of music was targeted at middle-aged and older Chinese-speaking audience with mostly Chinese orchestral pieces, folk music and *shidaiqu*; Fusion Band incorporated a wider range of audience ranged from young to old people encompassing the Chinese- and English-speaking audience where its repertoires mostly including Chinese and English popular music; Live Band drawn in the attention of young audience on the preference of both Chinese and English popular hits. Jazz Band attended to the Jazz lovers of all ages; *Tang Ren Gu* catered to the opening ceremony of Chinese corporate events with loud sound productions; Muhibbah performance composed of three major ethnicities of Malaysia accommodated to the local needs especially governmental and corporation functions; LED Water Drum attracted the contemporary audience with colourful lights, water splashing and sound effects; whereas All Girls Crystal Band supplied modernized Chinese instrumental performance to Chinese corporate functions.

As a result, Regal Orchestra showed the character of in-betweeness as it served multiple identities as Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Malaysian and global status through its transformation by applying various concepts such as glocalization, hybridization, commercialization and commodification to entertain a wider range of local and global audience,. It also strived to propagate Chinese and Malaysian music culture with different and diverse approaches to gain more popularity and attention from the contemporary multicultural nation.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

This chapter finalized this ethnographic research regarding the development and transformation of Regal Orchestra that conducted in Kuala Lumpur between the years of 2016 and 2017. The following subheadings comprised the implication of research, suggestion for future research and conclusion.

5.2 Implication of Research

Research on the gradual transformation of Regal Orchestra over the years is crucial as it contributed to the study of Chinese performing arts in contemporary Malaysia. Chinese orchestra that once belonged to a single ethnic group – the Chinese – and played solely with Chinese traditional pieces had transformed to cater the changing market demand in this contemporary multicultural society. Diverse facets were featured through varying establishment of performance groups and provision of different musical genres in accordance with the applying of various theories and concepts. Although all of the Regal Orchestra's performances were supplied for entertainment purpose, it served different identities and functions in its performance. Perhaps, the embedded issue that seemed to be unnoticeable to the young generation: the survival of Chinese music in this multi-ethnic nation was worth reminding through this study.

Several ethnographic approaches were adopted to achieve the three research objectives such as interviews, field observation and virtual fieldwork. The first and third objectives were implemented by visiting and interviewing a few insiders such as the musicians who worked for the organization. The director of Regal Orchestra was regarded as the key figure to narrate about the historical facts, the organization, its transformation, issues that undergone and his experiences. Performances and repertoires which included as the second objective were studied and analysed for their most celebrated types among the audience and different bands. Diverse music bands and drum groups were analysed and tabled with their combinations of instrumentation used and repertoires. The third objective was investigated on the transformation, influences, factors, functions and cultural identities of Regal Orchestra in the contemporary multiethnic nation.

Regal orchestra as an invented tradition of Malaysia transformed itself through borrowing elements globally and locally. It differentiated with the conventional Chinese orchestra in many ways. The traditional Chinese orchestral pieces and folk music only contributed to a small part of repertoires in Regal Orchestra's performance as compared to the Chinese popular music which remained as the most popular musical genre in the group. This served as a continuity of performing the *shidaiqu* and Mandopop in the context of Chinese orchestra after the Dama Asia Production. Besides, the Hong Kong's Cantopop and Taiwan's Hokkien pop are also performed occasionally upon the request of audience from certain dialect group. A larger audience for *shidaiqu* and Mandopop indicated the nostalgic feeling of remembering the past was appreciated among the middle to older range of Chinese audience.

Moreover, Regal Orchestra adapted the global and Western influences with performance incorporating English popular music, fusion music and Jazz music to satisfy particularly the English-speaking audience. On the one hand, multi-ethnic Muhibbah performance which in line with the 1Malaysia concept was formed due to its nationalistic desire and national belonging as it intended to be acknowledged as a Malaysian performing art rather than a Malaysian Chinese art form as in HANDS. In addition, drum groups that performed mainly for the corporate needs such as *Tang Ren Gu* and LED Water Drum obtained their origin from China and influences from other local drum groups. Furthermore, the All Girls Crystal Band continued the global trend of commercializing feminism after the 12 Girls Band which originated from the West

and glocalized in China. Hence, Regal Orchestra borrowed this idea from its commercial point of view and applied it into the local context.

As a summary, Regal Orchestra is an umbrella organization that stretched down to numerous types of services such as musical production, music recording, sound and lighting, theatre space rental and so forth apart from the diverse musical and drumming performance that studied in this research due to its commercial nature. The group started as a classical Chinese ensemble which slowly transformed by blurring its boundary of Chinese-ness through glocalization of the global influences and borrowed elements from the West and East in order to adapt into the heterogeneous local culture. The evidence was shown through localized globalism in its tremendous combinations of commercialized and commodified performance team. In addition, this led to the hybridity and in-betweenness of Regal Orchestra which exhibited by multiple local and global cultural identities in order for its sustainability in the competitive multicultural local and global context. Thus, the conventional Chinese orchestra that once confined to only a single ethnicity is exemplified by Regal Orchestra by transforming the traditional Chinese art form into various hybrid and diverse ensembles to fit into the multiculturalism of the commercial music scene in Malaysia.

5.3 Suggestion for Future Research

This research was conducted solely on a group of Malaysian Chinese ensemble in the state of Selangor. As Chinese orchestras whether professional or amateur ones were growing rapidly throughout the whole country, future research may compare a few orchestras from various states to investigate the use of concepts among them such as modernization, localization, globalization and so forth. Differences and similarities in terms of the development, organization, performances, repertoires and issues among these Chinese orchestras could be compared to trace the changing trend and musical taste of audience in this nation.

Moreover, researchers may look into the popular 1Malaysia concept of Muhibbah performance that introduced in year 2008 as there were quite a number of local performances incorporated Muhibbah music and dance to promote ethnic tolerance and harmony of this nation. For example, Muhibbah drum music in Regal Orchestra that employed different ethnic elements could be further studied in detail; the method of fusing various ethnic instruments in Muhibbah music performance could also be examined thoroughly.

5.4 Conclusion

All research objectives were met through analysing results from data collection and fieldwork investigation. This research was accomplished in the time period of one year, discussing the various aspects featured by Regal Orchestra in contemporary Malaysia. Therefore, future research may expand the research scope to study more than one Chinese orchestra and make comparison among the orchestras as this research only served a small portion to the body of the research field.

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