

CHAPTER 4

EPILOGUE

Summary

The function of Lagu Menghadap Rebab is signalled by its two titles, Lagu Menghadap Rebab by the Kelantanese, and Lagu Gerak Bangun by the South Thai practitioners of Mak Yong. The former title acknowledges the agency of the rebab as a producer of angin as well as a ritual symbol in the performance of Mak Yong. In the present thesis, angin is defined as a core value of Malay society central to social and personal well-being. The latter title indicates the function of the piece as a process by which angin is aroused. The present thesis has thus attempted to describe the musical processes of Lagu Menghadap Rebab in terms of angin.

Angin has been variously defined by previous writers in the following ways. These include the concepts of angin as nafsu (desires), angin as a personality force, angin as performance flow, and the different types and levels of angin. In the present thesis, all these concepts are drawn together, promoting an interpretation of angin that includes its expression as the unique aesthetic and energising force of Lagu Menghadap Rebab.

The present thesis has also demonstrated the ritual importance

of the rebab as a producer of angin. As a ritual instrument, the rebab is highlighted by its role as the musical instrument played by the Minduk, who guides through song, the shaman in the trance rituals of Main Peteri. The rebab also symbolises the archetypical teacher, the guru hok asal who is believed to reside in the east, the site of the rising sun. The rebab's ritual significance is also played out in preliminary invocations to the guardian spirits of each respective musical instrument of the musical ensemble which renders each instrument ritually and musically potent in the ceremonies prior to each Mak Yong performance.

In addition, previous research has demonstrated the rebab's role as a catalyst for performance. The rebab is even part of traditional Malay cosmology in the anthropomorphic naming of its physical construction. And as the present thesis reveals, the rebab is a central feature of origin myths of Mak Yong from South Thailand.

The present thesis has also found musical reasons as to why the rebab is considered to be the musical leader of the ensemble as the teacher of musical performance, or guru sekalian permainan. Thus, in Lagu Menghadap Rebab, the rebab has been demonstrated to trigger off the process of arousing angin, through symbolic, sociological and musical means.

The present thesis has attempted to provide evidence of the function of the arousal of angin through musical analyses of the sung-text, structure, rhythm and melodies of Lagu Menghadap Rebab.

The overall musical structure of Lagu Menghadap Rebab consists of a number of verses sung solo which alternate with a chorus of singers. The structure has been demonstrated to contain two formal styles which are interpreted in the present thesis as reflecting the arousal of angin as an aesthetical and energising performative force. The textual content has also been successfully interpreted to refer to angin and its arousal.

The basis of the argument is centred on the musical structure of Lagu Menghadap Rebab. In the general musical repertoire of Mak Yong and Wayang Kulit Siam, the gongan is the determinant of formal structure. However, Matusky's principle of the gongan as determinant of form in Mak Yong music is unable to explain the unusual structures in Lagu Menghadap Rebab. In the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab the melodic expressivity of the Pak Yong in interaction with the rebab part is the basis of a wholly unique and quite different formal structure. This expressivity has been interpreted to be an expression of angin. It is characterised by the way the singer stretches each melodic phrase to its aesthetic

fulfilment through the use of certain melodic techniques. These are through the utilisation of tarik and through melismatic ornamentation. This melodic style is further articulated musically and rhythmically by the rebab and the drums. Thus the flexible colotomic units of the first part of the piece as articulated by the gongs expand and contract to contain such passages of melody which are unmetred. It is this phenomenon which contrasts with that of the metrical beat-generating gonggan.

The following paragraphs summarise the musical structure of the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab. This consists of the first verse of text, the first chorus, through to the end of the first line of the second verse of text. The opening through to the end of the first verse of text consists of three colotomic units, each ending with a low gong tone. Each of the three versions of Lagu Menghadap Rebab analysed in the present study varies in the length of the overall structure of the first part. The first colotomic unit contains the solo rebab introduction to the piece, and is divided by a high gong tone. The ending low gong tone also acts as the opening gong for the second colotomic unit. The second and third colotomic units contain the text of the first solo. Only the third colotomic unit is divided by a high gong tone. The subdivision of the second and third colotomic units are not governed by any underlying principle of the binary subdivision

of the gong-unit. All three units are distinguished by unmetred passages. These unmetred passages are framed by opening and cadencing rhythmic patterns found in each gong-unit. In the second and third colotomic units, these unmetred passages are shaped by the melodic phrases of the vocal part, in collaboration with the rebab part.

The rhythmic layer played by the drums consists of sustained beats which punctuate the sung phrases of the first solo, with gongs articulating the overall structure. The first chorus consists of one colotomic unit divided by the high gong tone and ending on the low gong tone. The second half of the chorus is rhythmically similar to the second half of the third colotomic unit of the first solo. This formal style is determined by the melodic-textual phrases of the vocal part and continues through to the end of the first line of the second solo.

The text of the first solo of the piece utilises the metaphor of sovereignty, and describes the emergence of a king through details of royal regalia, office and symbols of sovereignty. The motif of kingship in the sung-text of Laqu Menghadap Rebab is a metaphor for angin. In the South Thai version of Laqu Menghadap Rebab, the text includes the Pak Yong's statement of intent to replace lost sovereignty, reinforcing the function of the first part to invoke and install the angin of the Pak

Yong, the angin-type conceptualised as a mythic king.

The thesis has also provided evidence for the rebab as vital guide and possible determinant of tonality in Lagu Menghadap Rebab. This supports the traditional view of the musical leadership of the rebab. The melodies of the vocal and rebab parts are built up from specific selections of tones, or scales. The melodic manipulation of these tones is affected by the performance methodology of the rebab, based on its fingering positions, as well as a restrictive fingering style which encourages agility within fixed finger positions. The outcome is that the basic units of rebab melody are what are called tonal centres or emphases, each of which is embellished by its neighbouring tones. This tonal style is echoed in the vocal part. The tonal range of the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab is fairly wide, encompassing the approximate range of an octave. In contrast to the second part of the piece which utilises a narrower tonal range, this wider tonal range is more aesthetically expressive.

The present thesis interprets these above-mentioned musical findings of the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab in the light of the manifestation of angin as an expressive and aesthetical agent of performance. The Pak Yong performs the first solo, sitting motionless in front of the rebab. The performative focus of the first solo is thus the vocal melody.

Anqin is conceptualised as a mythic king, and is invoked from within the psyche of the Pak Yong, who personally states her intention to take on kingship.

Anqin is further expressed in music through the melodic expressivity of the Pak Yong manifest through her control over the essential structural elements of the piece. The Pak Yong's melody is sung with aesthetic and expressive intent. It is both guided and supported by the rebab part. Her melody is characterised by the tarik factor, where the singer stretches out each phrase to its maximum aesthetic expression. The Pak Yong's melody is also embellished with intricate ornaments and melismas, and is coloured by a vocal intensity which ebbs and flows. The rebab melody, itself driven by a dynamic bowing style, drives and supports the vocal part through its cues, fluidly countering and anticipating the sense of meter.

Together, the interplay of rebab and vocal parts results in a melodic dynamism and compositional aesthetic which creates a sense of tension and release. This is evidence of anqin. In the first part of the piece, all other musical elements, such as form and rhythm, submit to the predominance of the vocal melody in interaction with the rebab part. This emphasises the importance of the individualised expression of the singer's anqin in her control over the essential compositional

elements.

The above-mentioned musical processes are established within the first solo. The melody of the subsequent chorus is sung by chorus members who echo the melody of the first solo. Midway in the first chorus, the Pak Yong begins to move her hands in slow and deliberate dance gestures. The entry of the chorus can thus be seen to provide the impetus to the Pak Yong to begin moving as a physical response to her expression of angin.

The second part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab strictly begins in the second textual line of the second solo and continues until the end of the piece. The second solo represents the transition between the two formal styles found in Lagu Menghadap Rebab. All subsequent solos and choruses are cyclical repetitions each of which consists of a basic 8-beat gongan repeated four times consecutively to produce a compound 32-beat structure of a cyclical chain of four 8-beat gongans, repeated in the same sequence throughout the rest of the piece. The second solo enters into this format in the second of the compound chain of four 8-beat gongans.

The text for this section is characterised by the metaphors of the gradual blossoming and unfurling movements of nature, signifying its abundance and self-disclosing potential. The

dance of the Pak Yong graduates from a seated to a standing position, from stillness to flowing gestures. The Pak Yong utilises certain textual strategies to enable her to concentrate on the increasingly complex dance gestures in addition to the composition of her textual/melodic phrases. These include the repetition of the last line of a verse in the first line of the following verse.

In the second part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab, the melodies of both the rebab and vocal parts shift to a higher and narrower vocal range. The gongan takes predominance over formal matters and the Pak Yong extends her energies into more active and complex dance gestures, accompanied by her composition of the sung text. This second part is distinguished by an increase of tempo, intensifying towards the end of the piece, supported by the increasingly complex drumming rhythms which anticipate the final gongs of each compound cycle. The alternating solos and choruses drive this build-up of musical intensity through the drone of the 'ayuh' sung alternately by the chorus and soloist. The piece finally reaches the concluding gongan, ending in this higher, and more intense tonality.

If the musical events of the first part are said to invoke angin, the musical events of the second part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab generate and arouse angin. Angin is manifested in the

intensification of such musical forces as described above. The process develops within the Pak Yong an increasingly heightened state of performative awareness, a signal that angin is being expressed through her performance, and is intensifying alongside the intensifying musical forces. Performing with angin is a stated prerequisite in Mak Yong. Thus the Pak Yong must get into a state of preparedness in order to successfully portray the dramas and tragedies of the mythic heroes. A significant part of this preparation is the performance of Lagu Menghadap Rebab.

The patient of Mak Yong who performs the role of Pak Yong as guided by a Pak Yong specialist, sometimes enters into trance in Lagu Menghadap Rebab, where her emotional condition supersedes aesthetical considerations. This trance level of the expression of angin is considered to be part of the curative process of healing in Mak Yong.

The personal aspect of angin is reinforced by the way in which the South Thai practitioner acknowledges her personal nenek moyang or ancestors as the provocateurs for and inspiration of performance, resulting in a unique introspective style of performance found in the first part of the Lagu Menghadap Rebab. In summary thus, the idiom of the arousal of the angin-semangat-nenek moyang matrix is in actual fact the Lagu Menghadap Rebab performance event itself.

As mentioned previously, the present thesis demonstrates the rebab's musical leadership in terms of its definition of the tonality of Mak Yong's music. This is exemplified in the utilisation of tonal emphases as basic units of melody, and the close relationship between rebab and vocal ornaments. As mentioned also, the rebab music provides important melodic and rhythmic cues to the singer via a rhythmically complex bowing technique that drives the overall pacing of the music.

However, the significance of the rebab is more than providing musical leadership as it aids and guides the arousal, expression and performance of angin in Laqu Menghadap Rebab by supporting and leading the singer's melodies. The rebab is so imbued with ritual potency that its very sound alone can generate angin, as exemplified in iseh angin, the diagnostic procedure by which the bomoh detects the ailment of the patient. Furthermore, the relationship of the rebab-player vis-a-vis the Pak Yong is overlaid by the significance of the relationship between the trance-inducing minduk vis-a-vis the shaman in Main Peteri. This interchange between the rebab and the one who faces him, results in the production of angin in performance. It is thus a primary ritual instrument engaged in the operations of a core value in the Malay world of illness and performance.

From a sociological point of view, the Pak Yong, an ordinary

villager, is elevated into kingship within the performance event of Lagu Menghadap Rebab. In musical terms, this social and performative transformation of the Pak Yong actress to supreme king is manifested in the Pak Yong's compositional control over musical form. The utilisation of the kingly metaphor and the Pak Yong's musical control implies the reinforcement and legitimisation of sovereignty, as a symbol of power in traditional Malay society. This transformation allows the full expression of the individuality of the Pak Yong.

Yet, this performative transformation of the Pak Yong which results in a reversal of status, albeit temporary, is additionally overlaid by the undertones of her attitude as a humble supplicant in a healing process.

However, the music of Lagu Menghadap Rebab, especially in the first part, does not contain evidence of an overly dominating pattern of relationships among the melodic parts. The musical analysis in the present thesis has shown that the melodic style of the Pak Yong does not work alone, but in conjunction with the rebab part. The unique musical interaction between the rebab and vocal parts has been proven to be interdependent and uniquely egalitarian in essence and structure. What is an apparently unequal social relationship between the Pak Yong as supplicant to the rebab-player as healer is undermined and

evened out owing to the mutually supportive nature of the musical relationship between the two. The Pak Yong's elevated status is thus radically tempered by a totally different concept which casts an equalising slant onto her musical relationship with the rebab-player.

It may be that a relationship between musical structures and social structures such as that presented here, is somewhat forced. However, in the interface between these two perspectives, as mentioned above, I suggest a possible undermining and subversion of the traditional Malay hierarchy through music. This is based on the unique formal structure of Lagu Menghadap Rebab, and the musical evidence of the equalisation of social roles through musical roles as represented by the rebab-player and the Pak Yong. This egalitarian musical relationship has provided a tantalising opportunity to speculate on Mak Yong's ancient origins amongst less hierarchically structured societies such as those of the Peninsular aborigines. This has even been referred to in the South Thai origin myths which suggest Mak Yong's origins as being located amongst a sub-group of the Peninsula's first peoples, the aborigines. All this has led me to conclude that the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab is an archetypical form of Mak Yong music, an Ur-form of music, whereby its traits are to be found to different degrees, in all Mak Yong music.

Speculations aside, an undoubtedly beautiful and expressive musical quality is found in all Mak Yong pieces, and in Lagu Menghadap Rebab is expressed in its most essential form. Angin, when linked to the music of Mak Yong as demonstrated in this study of Lagu Menghadap Rebab, explains the magical quality of the singer's song and the rebab's almost human-like invocation. In the performance event of Lagu Menghadap Rebab therefore, the arousal of angin, a core value in traditional Malay society, is expressed through music and dance.

Conclusions & Suggestions for Further Research

In conclusion, some suggestions, theories and further hypotheses arise as an outcome of the present study, which by its very nature cannot be complete, such as its non-specific detailing of the dance element.

As argued in the thesis, the music of Lagu Menghadap Rebab empowers the Pak Yong to express angin in song, in a uniquely interdependent musical relationship with the rebab. This aspect of musical form and style is suggested in the present thesis to have its roots in a more ancient form of Mak Yong. Therefore, the first part of Lagu Menghadap Rebab is theorised to represent an archetypical form or Ur-form of Mak Yong, elements of which are present in the rest of the general

repertoire.

A reason for this can be further argued in the following example. The more rhythmically defined versions of first parts of Lagu Menghadap Rebab as recorded in the 1990s as compared to the version recorded in the 1970s, suggest the journey of the cultural artifact of Mak Yong through time over the space of twenty years. One could hypothesise that aspects of Mak Yong, in this case, Lagu Menghadap Rebab, grew out of earlier forms, where the freer, unmetered structures gave compositional determination to the singer. And that the principles of this Ur-form are still adhered to in the melodic composition of the first part of the lagu as studied in this thesis. This is most clearly represented in the transcription of the recording from the 1970s. The process of change could be borne out by the simple illustration of the performer's urge to structure the first part of the lagu, as revealed in the versions sung by Mariam Titisan Air Mata and Che Ning in the 1990s.

The presence of nenek moyang as an aspect of angin appears to operate as a trigger for the transmission of performance skill and talent from one generation to another among the South Thai Mak Yong. Shamans of old needed the inherited presence of a spirit familiar in order to be effective in their administrations and to continue the tradition of healing as

passed down to them. One is tempted to speculate that the nenek moyang is the familiar spirit of the Pak Yong, suggesting that the Pak Yong was once a shaman, or that Mak Yong is linked to ancient shamanic rites.

However, further research into the nature of nenek moyang is necessary in order to provide more definitive answers to such areas of inquiry.

The rebab was a late cultural arrival to the ancient Malay world. Some questions arise, which perhaps can never be answered: Did the rebab enter into a pre-existing ritual relationship between the Minduk and patient of Main Peteri prior to the rebab's arrival? What was the symbolic relationship between the Pak Yong facing eastwards towards the healer before the rebab came and overlayed ancient meaning with new significances? How did such a recent cultural arrival become such a potent ritual symbol in the Malay world?

The relationship of tonality to function in Mak Yong, is another intriguing issue. A brief inspection of the tonal systems of many Mak Yong pieces revealed that the second part of Laqu Menghadap Rebab shares the same scale with only one other piece, that of the important angin-arousing Laqu Sedayung Pak Yong. This emphasises Laqu Menghadap Rebab's role of awakening the Pak Yong's angin. Needless to say, much

more research needs to be done to demonstrate this particular hypothesis. All the same, the notion is compelling.

Research into the relationship of the currently established repertoire according to melodic type is lacking at this stage. During the course of fieldwork, the preliminary findings of more than one name for one piece of music raised the issue of the significances generated by the names of the pieces. For archival reasons at the very least, research needs to be done to establish and document the melodic aspects of repertoire, according to the repertoire lists generated by previous writers, and utilising all available live and pre-recorded resources.