

AN ARTISTIC REVIEW OF SELECTED MUSICAL WORKS BY INTERCULTURAL COMPOSERS

Elvin Dainal^{*1}

¹*Academy of Arts and Creative Technology,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia
elvindainal@ums.edu.my^{*1}*

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ABSTRACT

It is natural to make new music compositions as self-expression but as a strength of self-identity as a music composer. However, are there things that need to be taken into account if an intercultural approach is applied to create new works? References to previous composers' works are very important in helping to develop the ideological direction of a composer's thoughts. Therefore, this article is written to analyze and discuss a few selected music composers who use intercultural approaches in their musical language. In line with the qualitative design, this artistic review applies an interpretive content analysis approach to works from selected music composers. The results of the analysis and further discussion have given the view that intercultural composers create their music by (i) combining or adapting elements in their own cultures with external cultures, and (ii) applying compositional music techniques according to the composer's musical genre.

Keywords: Intercultural, intercultural composer, music composition, artistic review, compositional technique.

INTRODUCTION

The act of creating new musical compositions serves not only as a means of self-expression, but also as a manifestation of one's identity and prowess as a music composer. Composers such as Bela Bartok (1881-1945), Lou Harrison (1917-2003), and Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b.1969) have engaged in the development of fusion music, effectively establishing their artistic identities via their musical creations. Bartok is recognised within academic circles both as an ethnomusicologist and as a composer. In his research, Panyaniti (1998) discovered that Bartok frequently included tunes from Hungarian folk art into his compositions, employing diverse timbres as sound effects. The scope of his ethnomusicological research encompasses not only the

indigenous music of Hungary, but also the musical traditions of the Middle East and Africa. In the realm of musical composition, Tajuddin skillfully integrates cultural components, including Islamic arabesque, which entails intricate interwoven lines commonly observed in Arabic or Moorish ornamentation, as well as the gamelan music indigenous to Malaysian and Indonesian societies (Gan, 2013). The aforementioned trio of composers exemplified distinct artistic identities characterised by the amalgamation of two cultural aspects within their musical vocabulary. When a composer introduces a novel composition of art music to the audience, it initiates a process that involves performance, reception, evaluation, and elucidation, with the anticipation of its acceptance within the realm of music (Willgoss, 2018). The utilisation of creativity is evident in both the composer's conception of the work and its reception by performers and listeners (ibid). The present argument posits that multicultural composers employed the notion of creation as a means of cultivating and refining their musical language. Citations to the works of preceding composers have a crucial role in shaping the conceptual trajectory of a composer's ideas. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine and deliberate about a limited number of music composers who employ international methodologies in their musical compositions. The inclusion of the chosen pieces in this study is anticipated to serve as a source of inspiration and provide insight into the notion of creativity for fellow composers.

METHODOLOGY

In line with qualitative research, this study applied an interpretive content analysis approach to the musical works of selected intercultural composers. As Drisko *et al* (2016) quoted Krippendorff defines content analysis as a research method that allows us to draw reliable and accurate conclusions about the contexts in which texts (or other meaningful matter) are used, based on the analysis of the texts themselves.” The musical works are selected based on the piece that composers used an intercultural approach in their composition. As Boddy (2016) explains the number of people you need in your study depends on the type of research you are doing and the way you are doing it. The data sources are accessed through the platform of Google search engine, and Google Scholar.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will use the CIC Model of Creativity introduced by Gabriel Joseph Musungu, where Creativity (C) in music comes from the relationship between Culture (C) and Information (I). According to Musungu (2008), “Culture is the total of one musical life absorbed from the environment through daily exposure including musical sounds and activities that make up the individual’s environment. Information consists of the knowledge and skills that are passed on to an individual, which includes both formal and informal training that involve traditional musicians”.

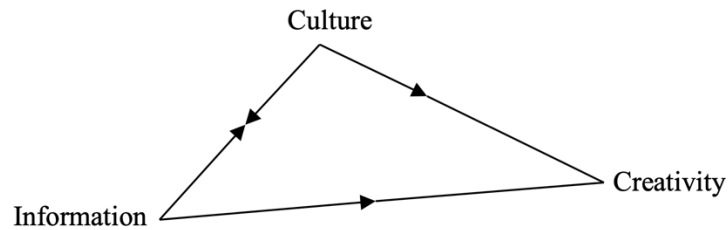


Figure 1. The Musungu's CIC creativity model

Music Composition Defined

Chapman's definition of music composition is when the music of two or more cultures is combined, the results can range from simply incorporating elements of each culture's music to creating entirely new musical forms. (Chapman, 2007). Music composition is the process of combining traditional and foreign musical elements to create a new work of art that can be enjoyed by audiences from both cultures (Musungu, 2008).

According to Kilin (2012), a New Zealand composer has identified various approaches to creating music using other cultures such as:

- a) Incorporating folk tunes or melodies derived from folk traditions within a composition of Western art music.
- b) Using non-Western modes, scales, and rhythmic ideas in a Western art music piece.
- c) Transcribing non-Western music or studying it and composing using traditional techniques to create a Western art music piece.
- d) Using non-Western music recordings as part of a Western instrumental or electroacoustic work.
- e) Composing chamber music for non-Western instruments, often in combination with Western instruments.
- f) f) The act of creating musical compositions for non-Western instruments, potentially in conjunction with Western instruments, within the framework of traditional music, or strongly influenced by genuine traditional performances and conceived in a similar style.

Western Tonal Music

Most Western music has been based on the tonality system since the 16th century. According to Benward and Saker (2003), a tonality system is a way of organizing musical notes (such as the notes of a major or minor scale) around a central note called the tonic. It has been developed since the Baroque period until the present day. However, during the 20th century, composers started developing atonal music or music that did not have any reference to key centers. This form of music was

introduced by Arnold Schoenberg (Kamien, 2008). According to *Kamus Seni Muzik* (2009), tonality can be described as the character of a piece of music related to the key center. It is a system of organizing musical notes (such as the notes of a major or minor scale, which is a sequence of notes made up of different half-step and whole-step intervals) around a central note called the tonic. Under the tonal system, harmonies and melodic lines can be organized around a localized tonic and are defined in relation to this implied center of gravity – the tonal center. Tonic refers to the first tone of a major or minor scale, which is also called the central tone of a key or key system. Tillman *et al* (2008) explained that Western music uses a set of 12 pitch classes, which are organized into groups of seven called diatonic scales. Diatonic scales can be major or minor, and they have different patterns of intervals between the notes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Piece 1: Bela Bartok's Three Hungarian Folk Songs from Csik for Piano (1907)

Béla Bartók was a renowned Hungarian composer and pianist. He is widely regarded as one of the most significant composers of the 20th century. Bartok's musical style exhibited a distinctive character that diverged significantly from other contemporary styles, characterised by a fusion of folk music elements, classical influences, and modernist tendencies. The individual demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for melodic and harmonic composition, prominently influenced by the musical traditions of Hungary and Romania. In this study, an analysis will be conducted on a musical piece titled "Three Hungarian Folksongs From Csik for Piano" by the aforementioned composer.

According to Anderson (2017), Bartok's *Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csik District* is one of his earliest works (1906 – 1907) and reflects the results of his early collaboration with Kodaly, where both of them started collecting Hungarian folk tunes. He had heard these folk tunes played on a shepherd pipe in the village of *Tekeropatak* and transcribed them for recorder and piano and later for piano solo. Bartok reported that he first heard *The Peacock* theme played by a man on the *tilinko*, a Romanian flute-like instrument. He did his piano arrangement later, whereby the tune is played mostly in single notes in the B Dorian mode and features many trills as it moves slowly. Marked *Rubato* in tempo, this piece is disarmingly direct and appealing in nature.



Figure 2 Opening - 1st theme (The Peacock)

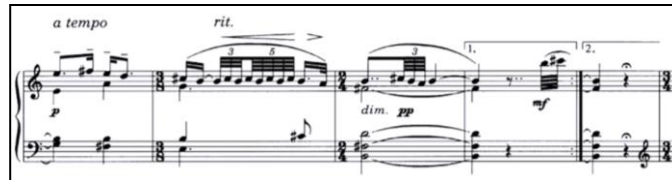


Figure 3 Ending - 1st theme (The Peacock)

The subsequent composition maintains a consistent tempo and exhibits a comparable sense of tranquilly. Once again, the composition exhibits irregularity in both the melodic and harmonic aspects, with the current piece being in the A Aeolian mode. The auditory composition in this context has a comparatively reduced tempo and a more subdued tonal quality in contrast to the preceding musical composition.



Figure 4 Opening - 2nd theme (At the Janoshida Fairground)



Figure 5 Ending - 2nd theme (At the Janoshida Fairground)

The final section, denoted as Poco vivo, is also presented in the A Aeolian mode, which corresponds to the same key as the second theme. The melodic composition has a joviality reminiscent of a march and is audibly presented on two occasions. The aforementioned folk tune adaptations by Bartok are some of his early works in this genre. Their unassuming nature reflects the composer's deliberate aim to faithfully capture the authentic sound and spirit of the music.



Figure 6 Opening - 3rd theme (White Lily)



Figure 7 Ending - 3rd theme (White Lily)

Piece 2: *Dances of Marosszek* (1927) by Zoltan Kodaly

Zoltan Kodaly’s orchestral composition *Dances of Marosszek* uses melodic material from several sources, including traditional instrumental dance music from the *Marosszek* region (now in Romania) and melodies from Transylvania (Kay Ong, 2011).



Figure 8 Original melody collected by Kodaly in Csik in 1910

The first theme of Kodaly’s *Dances of Marosszek* (Figure 8) is introduced by the violas, cello, and first clarinet in Bb. Kodaly’s melody is very close to the original folk melody, but he has made a few small changes.



Figure 9 Original melody, first recorded by Bela Vikar, transcribed by Kodaly

The second melody that Kodaly used in this piece was taken from Bela Vikar, a predecessor in the field of folk music collection. Kodaly did not use the entire main melody of the folk song that he collected from Bela Vikar. Instead, he created variations of different parts of the melody. These variations were originally thought to be improvisations by the performer, but it was later discovered that they were actually alterations that Kodaly had transcribed from later parts of the original performance as indicated in Figure 9 (Sarosi, 1983). The third melody is an example of the *parlando style*, “in which popular, improvised music of the shepherd’s pipe is transformed into

art music of the highest quality” (Eosze, 1962). Eosze was saying that the free, endless melodic line and the virtuosic performance perfectly suited the passage.



Figure 10 Original melody transcribed by Kodaly

According to Kay Ong (2011, p.67), Kodaly’s *Dances of Marosszek* is a prime example of his emerging style of pieces based on folk music. While many of the melodies in the piece are taken directly from folk songs, Kodaly’s use of harmony and orchestration gives each section a more complex and modern sound. He does not simply copy folk music idioms, but instead alters the melodies to fit within modern music standards, while still retaining their essential character.

Piece 3: *Main Bersama – Sama* (1978) by Lou Harrison

Lou Harrison (1917 - 2003) is a well-known composer and humanist who played an important role in the development of gamelan through both composition and instrument design. He embraces the spirit of music found in Asian cultures and expresses it with Western instruments. *Main Bersama - Sama* (1978) is one of his musical compositions incorporating *Sundanese Gamelan Degung* from Indonesia. The gamelan set in this piece is written to feature the traditional musical instrument of Indonesia called *Suling* and the Western music instrument, French Horn. According to Chacko (2013), Harrison has a deep engagement with melody. There are two (2) sets of melody in *Main Bersama-Sama*. Each melody is played by the *Suling* and French Horn in one section. Melody 1 consists of four (4) unequal phrases (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Melody 1 in *Main Bersama-sama*

Melody 2, consists of three (3) long phrases (see Figure 12). The two (2) melodies share the same cadence but different rhythm patterns.



Figure 12. Melody 2 in *Main Bersama-sama*

Piece 4: *Tenunan II* (2002) by Tazul Izan Tajuddin

Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b.1969) is one of the living-leading contemporary composers in Malaysia. His musical style explored more in atonal music called ‘*avant-grade*’, or experimental music. Tajuddin’s music has been influenced by Asian cultures, especially Malaysia and Indonesia. This thesis will review one of his musical works that won the first prize in Toru Takemitsu Composition Award in 2002, entitle *Tenunan II*. This piece was inspired by the concept of weaving, making it a type of ‘woven sound’ resulting in texture-based composition or ‘sound fabric’. According to Tajuddin (2002), “*Tenunan is a Malay word meaning weave. Even though technically batik is not woven, conceptually the piece is conceived as weaving which happens in the notation, in the process of composing and sound organization of one sound to another (one note to another)*”

Batik can be defined as a method of producing coloured designs on textiles by dyeing them by having first applied wax to the parts to be left undyed (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). *Tenunan II* is a continuation of Tajuddin’s early work called *Tenunan* where he developed techniques including the materials (weaving, *batik*), the musical structure, and the concept of sound.

The number indicates time signature in every bar							
PI	1	4	7	3	2	6	5
PII	4	7	3	2	6	5	1
PIII	7	3	2	6	5	1	4
PIV	3	2	6	5	1	4	7
PV	2	6	5	1	4	7	3
PVI	6	5	1	4	7	3	2

Figure 13. Pattern organization in *Tenunan II* (Pattern I – Pattern VI)

Tenunan II started with 14 small patterns which create a bar and time signature (see Figure 13 & Figure 14). Every pattern in *Tenunan II* will have seven (7) bars and has a time signature represented in the bar. These bars are connected to each other and move in time.

“In *Tenunan II*, the concept of sound is moving in time. The landscape of sound changes constantly from the one-time signature grid to another. The pattern of sound is not repeated, and they create irregular patterns throughout the piece. The complexity of emotions and the act of composition are translated in the abstract (Tajuddin, 2002).”

Figure 14 Time signature construction in Pattern I (bar 1 – 4)

Inspired by weaving in batik technique, Tajuddin used this concept in the piano part (see Figure 15), where one note constantly crosses another note.

Figure 15 Weaving concept by the piano in *Tenunan II* (bar 1 – 3)

Every pattern in the *Tenunan II* piece represents a small pattern of *batik*. The wax in the composition is referred to as the musical bar line that prevents the previous pattern from crossing to the next pattern and the series of time signatures itself represents a small pattern in the piece. It is only a small part of the complete *batik*. As referenced in Figure 16, the rectangles (colored box) are the small patterns of the *batik*. In *Tenunan II* composition, every pattern is represented in a rectangle. When all the patterns are combined, it will result in a big and complete *batik* representing a composition.

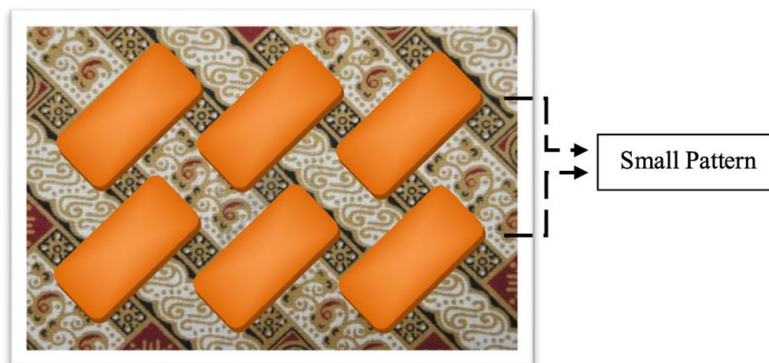


Figure 16 Rectangles boxes represent the small pattern in *Tenunan II* by Dainal (2013)

Piece 5: *Phenomenon* (2004) & *Sattha* (2005) by Narong Prangcharoen

Narong Prangcharoen (b.1973) has become one of the most respected and successful classical composers in Asia since winning several international awards including the second prize from the 2004 Toru Takemitsu Composition Award entitled *Phenomenon* (2004) and Winner of the Pacific Symphony's American Composer Competition (2005). Most of his compositions are inspired by Thai musical elements and cultural influences, used in Western musical settings to express his musical works. *Phenomenon* (2004) and *Sattha* (2005) are chosen for the purpose of reviewing his musical idea.

“Phenomenon portrays the mysterious and unexplainable natural occurrence of the Naga fireballs over the Mekong River that takes place each year at the end of Buddhist Lent. Prangcharoen then achieved the portrayal of the fireballs, light in the darkness, through elaborated textures, vast instrumental ranges, and extreme crescendo and diminuendo.” (Chucherdwatanasak, 2014, p. 120)

Chucherdwatanasak (2014) asserts that Prangcharoen's orchestral work has a melodically based texture. It's possible that Thai music, like other traditional Asian art music, had an influence on this because it places more emphasis on melody than harmony, which is the case in Western music. The orchestral compositions of Prangcharoen have two different textures: (i) two levels of foreground and background, and (ii) three layers of foreground, middle ground, and backdrop. The piece's primary theme is played loudly and in unison, and the background contains a rhythmic pattern that repeats. For instance, *Phenomenon*'s conclusion leads to the play's last and most significant climax (see Figure 17). The main theme is played by the treble wind instruments (piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, and trumpets) in the foreground, while the countermelodies are played by the French horns and lower wind instruments (bass clarinets, bassoons, contrabassoon, trombones, bass trombone, and tuba). The second texture is a layer of restless ostinato background provided by the piano and strings.

Prangcharoen also composed *Sattha* (2005) to remember the victims of the tragic tsunami that hit South Asia in December 2004, on the first anniversary of the event.

The piece begins with an imitation of crack sounds of the oceanic crust through Bartók pizzicato (snap pizzicato) in the strings, accented by a chromatic cluster on the piano and a strike on the percussion metal plate. It then conveys the atmosphere of the tsunami from its origin as rather quiet, impotent vibrations through sustained notes in the low register. The sound gradually becomes louder and tenser throughout the course of the entire composition to illustrate the formation of small, distant currents to enormous,

powerful waves that consumed over 200,000 lives in thirteen countries.
 (Chucherdwatanasak, 2014, p. 121)

Chucherdwatanasak, in his further research, said that Prangcharoen often used Thailand's musical quotations in his orchestral music, but he rarely copied Thai melodies or rhythms directly. Prangcharoen believes that simply copying a melody from Thai music is too simple and limits his creative options. Therefore, instead of using a whole melody, he prefers to use small pieces of melodies and develop them using his own compositional techniques. In the piece *Sattha*, Prangchareon quotes from a Thai traditional song called *Mon-Rong-Hai*. This song is sung at funerals to describe the virtues of the deceased and to create a mournful atmosphere. Prangchareon uses a solo cello to imitate the moaning sound of the song, with sustained pitches that slide up and down (see Figure 18).

The image displays a page of a musical score for the piece 'Phenomenon', starting at bar 188. The score is organized into several sections, each with a label on the left side:

- Foreground melody:** This section includes staves for Fl. 1-2, Pic., Ob. 1, Ob. 2-3, and Clt. 1-2. The woodwinds play melodic lines with sustained notes and some slurs.
- Foreground counter-melody:** This section includes staves for B. Cl., Bass. 1-2, and Cbn. The bassoon and cello parts feature sustained, sliding lines that provide a counter-melody to the woodwinds.
- Foreground melody:** This section includes staves for Horns I, II and III, IV, Tpt. 1, and Tpts. 2-3. The brass instruments play melodic lines, often with sustained notes.
- Foreground counter-melody:** This section includes staves for Tbn. 1-2, B. Tbn., and Tba. The tubas play sustained, sliding lines that provide a counter-melody.
- Other instruments:** The score also includes staves for Timpani (Timp.), Percussion 1, 2, and 3 (Perc. 1, 2, 3), and a Solo Cello (Cello). The percussion parts feature rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings like 'damp' and 'f'.

The score is written in a standard musical notation with various dynamics (e.g., *ff*, *f*, *mf*) and articulations (e.g., slurs, accents). The overall texture is dense, with multiple layers of foreground and counter-melody.

Figure 17 Foreground with ostinato background in Phenomenon (bar 188 – 192)

Ostinato background

Pranacharoen: Phenomenon

189 190 191 192

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Pranacharoen: Phenomenon". It features an "Ostinato background" for strings and piano. The score includes staves for Piano (Pno), Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vc), and Double Bass (Db). The music is characterized by a repetitive, rhythmic pattern in the strings and piano, with dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mf*. The score is numbered 189, 190, 191, and 192.

Figure 17 Cont.

Moaning Sobbing

solo, freely

mf *espress.* (*mourning*)

gliss. *f* *gliss.* (*wide vib.*)

Imitation of *pi-mon*'s decorated counter-melody

Vc. 34 35 36 37

Vc. 38 39 40 41

The image displays musical notation for a piece titled "Mon-Rong-Hai" from "Satha" (2005). It features a solo section with a "Moaning" and "Sobbing" section. The solo is marked "solo, freely" and includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *espress.*, (*mourning*), *f*, and *gliss.* (*wide vib.*). The notation includes slurs and breath marks. Below the solo, there are two staves of violin (Vc.) imitating a decorated counter-melody, numbered 34-37 and 38-41. The notation includes slurs and breath marks.

Figure 18 Musical quotation of *Mon-Rong-Hai* in *Satha* (2005)



Piece 6: *See the Sun* (2007) by Jim Chapman

Jim Chapman was born and raised in rural Queensland, Australia. He worked for the Queensland Government Public Service after completing his psychology studies in 1980. When he had free time, he played music in a band during the peak of punk and reggae music. In 1983, he travelled to Brazil and was deeply influenced by the musical culture of Latin America. In his travels, he found that he was fascinated by Latin American and African Music. He stayed in South Africa to learn more about African music. Returning to Australia in 2000, he developed his musical skills from the musical culture that he encountered, which is essentially a mixture of Western Popular, Folk, and Jazz music, with African music culture. His work, *See the Sun* (2007), will be reviewed as it contains elements of intercultural mixed together as a musical.

See the Sun is a popular music with an ABAB form with characteristics of West African drumming called 'Casa' and Congolese style guitar pattern. According to Chapman (2007), the music is made for dancing, and it switches between long verses

with many rhythms and instrumental sections. The chorus has a more regular beat, like a Western disco song. *See the Sun* is written for a vocalist supported by backing vocals, combined with a rhythm section made up of African indigenous music instruments. The ensemble comprises the drum, bass, two guitars, marimba, percussion, and the djembe (see Table 1).

Table 1 Instrumentations used in *See the Sun*

Western Music Instruments	African Indigenous Music Instruments
Drum Guitars 1 & 2 Electric Bass Marimba	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">Djembe</div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">Dundun</div>  </div>

The ‘Casa’ call is a motive found in the introduction and bridge sections. The repetitive harmonic progression of I-V-IV-IV-V-I is built around two intertwined guitar melodies (see figure below).



Figure 19 Basic pattern of ‘Casa’ call



Figure 20 Interlocking guitar figures for the verse (bar 7)

The antiphonal phrase is a common feature in both African and Western music, and it is a popular technique used by African composers. In the song “See the Sun”, the antiphonal technique is used between the lead and backing vocals.

The image shows a musical score for antiphony. The top staff is labeled 'Call' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Response'. The lyrics for the 'Call' part are: 'Hey Si Si Whats a mat - ter' and 'Oh Ye bo - That's much bet - ter'. The lyrics for the 'Response' part are: 'she's weep - ing and cry - ing' and 'she's mov - ing and rous ing'. The score is in G major and 4/4 time, starting at bar 9.

Figure 21 Antiphony application written for the main vocal and backing vocal (bar 9 – 11)

Summary of the Musical Works by Selected Composers

Below is the summary of reviewed musical works from the selected intercultural composers:

Table 2 Summary of the compositional strategies by intercultural composers

Composer	Piece/Year of Work	Compositional Strategies
Bela Bartok (Hungary)	<i>Three Hungarian Folksongs From Cisk</i> (1907)	<u>Hungarian Folksongs + Western Classical</u> Collected Hungarian folksongs from Cisk district, and re-arranged the melody into solo piano.
Zoltan Kodaly (Hungary)	<i>Dances of Marosszék</i> (1927)	<u>Hungarian Folksongs + Western Classical Orchestra</u> Borrowed three melodies (with slight alterations) from Csik folk music into an orchestral genre
Lou Harrison (America)	<i>Main Bersama-Sama</i> (1978)	<u>Sundanese Gamelan Degung + Western Instrument</u> Express his interest by using Gamelan Degung featuring a Western music instrument, French Horn to play the melody together with the Sundanese traditional instrument <i>Suling</i> .
Tazul Izan Tajuddin (Malaysia)	<i>Tenunan II</i> (2002)	<u>Malay Weaving Technique + Western Musical Setting</u> Transformed the Malay weaving technique into musical structure and used a European platform (orchestra) to showcase his creativity.
Narong Prangcharoen (Thailand)	<i>Phenomenon</i> (2004) & <i>Sattha</i> (2005)	<u>Thai Musical Elements + Western Musical Setting</u> Using Thai music and cultural influences to create Western art music using an orchestra.
Jim Chapman (Australia)	<i>See The Sun</i> (2007)	<u>African Music Elements + Western Pop</u> The song uses a West African drum called a “Casa” and a Congolese guitar pattern in a Western pop style.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the artistic reviews of the musical works by various composers had succeeded in creating their own musical language. I argue that the composers had applied the concept of creativity in their musical language, as what has been introduced by Musungu (2008) where Creativity (C) in music comes from the relationship between Culture (C) and Information (I). Once again, it is hoped that this artistic review of selected intercultural composers will give an idea of the concept of creativity to other composers.

For further research, the recommendations have been presented as follows: (i) collecting the art tradition knowledge that slowly disappears by the current generation in the form of documentation, discussing the issues related to music art tradition, and promoting all these traditions at the international level, and (ii) encourage the younger composers to develop their compositional techniques by drawing inspiration from extra-musical concepts. Zamani (2014) said that more research about traditional music art should be done to evolve and promote own culture worldwide.

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