

## Musical practice of Malay Film

It is very difficult to imagine this genre without the virtual dominance of one figure for whom Penang must rest as birthplace and identity Malaysian but one whose influence was very strongly felt in Singapore and Indonesia. It is of considerable import to understand the significance of P. Ramlee's success through Singapore. Lockard points out that Singapore remained the centre of Malay popular culture and intellectual life well into the 1960s. Although he set for Singapore on August 9, 1948 to Singapore, he was quite fortunate to have arrived at an infrastructure that had already been developed by Malay Film Productions, who as James Harding points out succeeded a company which could be traced to 1937.<sup>1</sup> This activity according to Harding and Sarji, was run by Shaw Brothers built out of *inspired improvisation* in the face of a *lack of technical resources*.<sup>2</sup> Human resource we are informed arrived from a number of destinations. B.S. Rajhans, who spotted P.Ramlee, alongside other Indian directors, was imported from India in the face of scarcity of local technical support. Actors and actresses were recruited from the cabarets of Singapore and from the Malay and Indonesia troupes who performed in sandiwara and bangsawan.<sup>3</sup>

P. Ramlee's entry into the market was propitious timing, considering a number of previously disappointing experiments. The Shaw Brothers had attempted to woo an audience with existing Chinese films with little impact. Tony Danker's accounts offer a clue to this...*I played for two Malay films...Bermadu*<sup>4</sup>...*then I played guitar music with the David Lincoln Orchestra...another film was Topeng Saitan, the star of this movie was Momo*<sup>5</sup>...*he used to come out in the early days as an older person...While the film was going on...while they were shooting, we had to play...usually we had to play while the main star was singing the song...this was open air stuff in Geylang Serai...we did this many times...pre-war...P. Ramlee came much later...I remember Topeng Saitan was being filmed at Jalan Ampas...Balestiar...but for Bermadu, we did some of the scenes at a Malay village at Geylang Serai...then in Siglap...big place...there is where had big clouds...*<sup>6</sup>

Tan Sooi Beng's work on the 78 RPM industry pre Japanese Occupation draws attention to *the recorded repertoire of the 1930s* which included music from a few Malay films. *The first Malay film was Laila Majnun, which was based on a bangsawan legend and was released in 1934. The director was an Indian, B.S.Rajhans. As in bangsawan, 'enchanting Egyptian and Arabian Dances' and 'Lilting Song Hits in Classical Malay' were featured (Straits Echo, 20 April 1934).*

*Other films made prior to World War II dealt with contemporary stories and some even with social themes. These included Mutiara, Bermadu, Toping Syaitan, Hanchor Hati, and Terang Bulan di Malaysia (Sunday Gazette, 4 August 1940, Times of Malaya 27 October 1940, Filem Melayu, 1 July 1941). Most of the films were produced by the Chinese entrepreneurs Run Run and Runme Shaw (Shaw Brothers), directed by Hau Yaw and assisted by Miss Wan Hai Ling (Chinese Brothers from Shanghai). The featured actors were largely drawn from bangsawan...(Filem Melayu, 1 August 1941).*

*Additionally, in order to make profits, recording companies did not risk recording unknown performers. Only the best were recorded and re-recorded. The recording artists were either famous bangsawan stars such as Miss Norlia, Miss Julia, Miss Tijah and Mr. K. Dean or they were winners of competitions organised by the recording companies...the most highly-skilled musicians formed the orchestras of the recording companies. The HMV and Columbia orchestras were led by A. Rahman, Ahmad Jaafar and Osman Ahmad. D. Lincoln's Orchestra also played for the both HMV and Columbia. Zubir Said and Yusuf B. led the Pathe Orchestra.<sup>7</sup>*

*It is highly unlikely that Chinese themes attempted by the Shaw Brothers were to find immediate resonance with a culture that had strong Indian influences as well as a well-established bangsawan and keronchong infrastructure supported by the Straits Chinese. Tony again provides some clues. For most of these songs (Lagu nasib, later lagu asli) the highest sales were actually made not by the Malays but by the Peranakans...those keronchong orchestras with Malays acting in it...but we had Chinese singers, you know...Lily Toh...she used to sing keronchong and all that...she only recorded four songs...but it sold very well in those days...because she was Peranakan...the Peranakans loved keronchong, asli and lagu nasib....<sup>8</sup>*

*Yusnor Ef, also points to an activity with some of its roots in Indonesia at what he calls Istana Kampung Glam which he suggests predates the Shaw Brothers forays...that is the time the composers came from Indonesia...that was the time they composed but those songs were mostly Indian influence...last time it was only about bangsawan...bangsawan was stage play...the stories were about fairy tales and fantasy<sup>9</sup>...when they came into the film industry...things changed...film started in 1933, Shaw Brothers around 1945/1946...before Shaw Brothers they had a Film Nusantara<sup>10</sup> company...all the directors and actors were from Indonesia...<sup>11</sup>*

One of directors, B.S Rajhans' directed *Laila Majnun* in 1933, with a cast from a local opera group, likely to have been drawn from Malay and Indonesia troupes performing bangsawan and sandiwara. The fate of the Istana Kampung Glam

activity may have been direct competition with live performance or not being a profitable venture or perhaps both but remains speculative pending further research. The more important point, essentially, was that P. Ramlee may not have been the primer mover in music of Malay popular film in Singapore but rather the very catalyst for the emergence of what Harding and Sarji refer to as *the golden age of Malay cinema*.<sup>12</sup> Yusnor Ef makes the telling point, *P. Ramlee came in 1948 in Malay film when it started to become very popular...that was the time when the Malays came to know about the film...many songs were to come out of it... and besides that, there were singers doing recording*.<sup>13</sup> What is remarkable here is the way in which a number of communities in Singapore were intertwined in such a public venture...*the technical side of the Malay film industry was Indian, the financing was Chinese and the actors and artists were Malay*...<sup>14</sup>

In a 1954 publication, **Arts of Malaya**, Tony Beamish observed *Hindustani music [was] popular far beyond the confines of the Indian...communities...interesting experiments in Western orchestration can now be heard in both. At the same time, traditional skill is being maintained and the more esoteric forms of communal music continue to be played in Malaya. Of these, Carnatic songs... have an enthusiastic following in the country, and are supported not only by local arts societies but by the occasional visits of distinguished performers from...India and other parts of South-East Asia*.<sup>15</sup> A chapter on film production in Southeast Asia by Tamaki Matsuoka Kanda has opening paragraph articulates sites of cultural exchange between India and Southeast Asia during the 1950s and 1960s; not so much through diplomatic ties but through film:

*One of the centres was Singapore. Chinese bosses, Malay stars and staff from all over Asia—Indian, Filipino, Chinese, Malay, Indonesian and Japanese also—made films together. As S. Ramanathan said, “It was a really cosmopolitan atmosphere.”*<sup>16</sup> John Lent’s chapter, corroborates Tamaki’s accounts with the broader context of the film industry in Malaysia and Singapore, hence drawing on a historical unity of the Kuala Lumpur and Singapore leading to the latter’s independence in 1965 and slightly beyond.<sup>17</sup>

John Lent, however, goes much further: *Usually, the Indian directors just translated Indian scripts into Malay, the result being that the films had all the Indian nuances, cultural idiosyncracies and mannerisms, and very little that was truly Malay*.<sup>18</sup> A view of Malay film as a translation of Indian film in all but language is curious when juxtaposed with Tony Beamish’s estimation of the greater popularity of Hindustani music. Why is there an affinity expressed between Malay film and Hindustani film but not Tamil film? Phani Majumdar, Chisty, Baldev Singh Rajhans, S. Ramanathan, Lakshmana Krishnan and B.N Rao, counted among the pioneering directors of Malay film, reveal such a range of

diversity of Indian-ness that it would be difficult to predict a predominantly Hindustani translation. Support for Hindustani film, and by extension Hindustani film songs, by the Malay community can only invite further research at this point.

What characterised P. Ramlee was the completeness of artistry he embodied. He was taught violin and guitar and learnt his lessons well; was talent-scouted by Rajhans because of his voice; acquitted himself very well in front of the movie camera; and was admired for his acting and later directing skills. Malay Film Productions (MFP) employed Ramlee as a musician, playback singer and actor for 60 Straits Settlement dollars a week. His duties included writing some songs to conform to the film director's requirements, singing them and leading the Orkestra Kembang Murni. According to Harding and Sarji, the early Malay films were modelled on Indian films, which had dancing and singing. L. Krishnan, the director who gave Ramlee the stardom he is known for today, was originally from Madras and employed by MFP in 1949 because of his expertise. One of his observations was the mammoth task facing a director of a fledgling industry *It was a very raw industry at that time.....the director was basically the anchor of everything...a one-man job...my immediate reference was Indian films. Often we borrowed story lines from Indian films and transplanted them into a Malay setting.* There was another source: *I used to venture into the bangsawan frequently in those days but I never really favoured the typical bangsawan actor...he would always overact. And that would not go down well on film.*<sup>19</sup> Therefore, *the music...was one of the most important singing ingredients.*<sup>20</sup> In **Chinta** (1948), for instance, Ramlee was the playback singer for Roomai Noor, a bangsawan trained artist, to songs composed by Zubir Said, in addition to a modest part as an actor. In **Bakti** (1950), a storyline adapted from *Les Misérables*, Ramlee was portrayed as a hero, with Roomai Noor as villain, one song **Satay**, composed by Osman Ahmad, was observed by Harding and Sarji to have *carried an echo in it of music written by G.F.Handel.*<sup>21</sup>

At the support level, Ramlee served his employers well. Shaw Brothers ran Jalan Ampas Studios on a tight schedule. No film was supposed to take longer than three months to make.<sup>22</sup> By some quirk of calculation, Ramlee and by extension Shaw Brothers were able to capitalise on extremely good situations.

The practice itself was such that the success of the song depended on the composer, singer and lyricist and of course presumably the instrumental ensemble. To a large extent, the song was the outcome of the dictates of the film and film director. At one extreme, composer, singer and lyricist could be three separate persons, while at the other, all three were found in one person and P. Ramlee was credited with a number of them beginning with **Budi di Bawa Mati** (Berhati-hati)

from the film *Derita* in 1951. Ramlee was not short of collaboration with composers. Songs from his first film **Chinta** (1948) were written by Zubir Said. His association with some composers varied in length of collaboration. With Osman Ahmad that collaboration over songs was quite extended. Ahmad Jaafar composed two songs for Ramlee, **Ibu** from the film of the same name in 1953 and **Tak Puas Mata Memandang** from **Budi Mulia** of 1953. Yusnor Ef was the lyric writer for **Senjakala** from **Madu Tiga** (1964) and **Lanang tunang tak jadi** from **Dajal Suchi** (1974) with the song composed by Kassim Masdur. Yusnor had a much bigger role in writing the lyrics for **Joget Istana**, **Tari Panglima** and **Bermandi-manda** from the film **Tunggal** (1961).

### The Musical Practice of Malay Film

The watershed period we are told of appear in the 1940s to the 1960s with the proliferation of Malay popular film, giving rise to directors, composers, singers, lyricists and editors. These Malay songs, which acknowledging primary Hindustan origins, also seem to draw on a variety of dance music influences such as cha-cha, samba, rumba, tango, bossanova, mambo to name a few. The lyrical content of the songs were not of a serious nature; love, advice, nostalgia, moral issues and advice. An important consideration then was the singer who held the key to the song and its popularity or reception. Ef notes the practice on records which did not acknowledge names of composers or lyricists which makes attribution difficult if not impossible unless there was personal knowledge.

By all accounts, the popularity of these songs and their consumption would require explanation. It is very likely that such recording material was expensive as with the attendant equipment like the gramophone. One of two possibilities for its proliferation are the presence of one of these in a kampung which was a shared resource in that locale. It is very likely one family possessed the resource and when new releases were purchased, neighbours would be invited to partake of the latest songs. The relative informality present in the social structure and practice of a kampung is likely to have supported such a practice. A second possibility arises from the use of amplification at much larger settings, like social functions, weddings and other public occasions within the sphere of the Malay community. Either this came in the form of gramophone via a public system or mediated presence, namely a band of musicians recreating the songs with whatever available instrumentation afforded in that instance. Yusnor was himself such an example. *I joined another group Pancaragam Aneka...accordion, double bass, got violin...like a small combo...I became popular as a singer...at the time, I was in Jalan Ampas watching the filming...I got to listen to the songs...I knew a few songs from the film...so when my band went out to play for weddings, we had the*

*edge...we sang the latest songs...like songs by the group **Kenek Kenek Udang** (Gergasi ca. 1969)...all these songs I used to sing at functions so I became very important singer...there were other singers but I was important...sometimes when I arrived late people kalang-kabut...so when I arrived...my colleagues would say 'hey why are you late...people are waiting to hear the songs...I stayed quite long with this group.'*<sup>23</sup>

At the time the groups were known as Musical Parties or Pancaragam. *In my time they had the Sri Pemuda Harmonium Parti...so Parti Pancharagam Anika...Kenchana Wati...Pancharagam (the term) they also used...Pancharagam Kampung Glam was led by Kartina Dahari's father...at that time many Hindustani groups competed with the Malay groups...Chandineraat party...Naujahan Party...at that time Hindi films were very hot...those featuring Divanan, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Vijantimala, Veena Kumari...really popular at the time...they played for weddings, any shows....nothing too big in scope or scale...especially the Malay weddings....*<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between music and text is already a complex issue without it being gridlocked in a film. Ramlee was reported to have said that every song depended on the composer's feelings. Since the very emotion itself was incapable of producing the desired result, the composing of the song, inspiration had its own will. Ramlee however, did not work in an environment that could support song-writing at an irregular pace. In any case, the director of the film was very likely the person who decided the kind of song to be composed. Harding and Sarji observed that *it was common for the songs in a Malay film to have a Hindi beat. Nevertheless, when writing a song purely to entertain and without any link to a film, P.Ramlee preferred to revive the traditional Malay spirit.*<sup>25</sup>

Another concern of P.Ramlee was to emphasise the importance of a collective empathy between composer and lyricist. Yusnor discusses this in some detail....*old generation like Zubir Said, Ahmad Jaafar, P. Ramlee, Ahmad Nawab, Kassim Masdur...these people could write music by notation...so always they wrote the music first...melody first...I could not read these notes...so they would play it on the piano or guitar and the melody of the song and record in on a cassette...I would memorise the melody...try to get the feeling of the song and mood of the song, sad or happy or some kind of comedy...that will lead me to thinking about how to put up the words of the song....sometimes I would ask the composer, when he/she composed the song...what they were thinking...love problems...then they would tell me its something like this...so I based it on what they tell me...I created the words...and to create the words to suit the music is not easy....last time people*

*making the song...from here (head) and here (heart)...that means idea and feeling...come out there's something...then you write it in notation...and you call the professional musicians with the score...you play the music...how you key in with the music...how you arrange the music...I wrote the lyrics for a song composed by Kassim Masdur...**Gelisah (Restless)**...sung by Ahmad Jais...the lyrics come out of my own personal experience...I fell in love with the girl who is today my wife...she was 17 I was 27...we chased each other...sometimes I chased and she was very hard to get...I felt very restless...I went to Jalan Ampang studios...Kassim Masdur is a music composer who wrote for film...so he played a song on the guitar...I asked him what song this is...he said the melody is a sad one...he was also having problems...I suggested writing the lyrics because I too had problems...so I wrote the lyrics...and the song became a hit...sung by Ahmad Jais...that it the song about the girl that eventually became my wife...who is still my wife for 37 years...whenever I am interviewed I say this... and I am recorded on radio for having said this...many of my lyrics are based on my experience...some are based on composers' or even singers' experiences...I have one song a Kassim Masdur song...I got to write the lyrics...I didn't know how to write the lyrics...Sani Sahuri...this song sounds quite sad...do you have any ideas? She said Cik Gu, this song...I want to tell my story...during my birthday, my loving grandfather passed away...spoil my birthday but (it was a) blessing people say...So I penned the title **Tahun sedih bagi ku**...so when she sang the song people thought she had been cheated by the boyfriend...actually not the case...a Kassim Masdur song sung by Saloma and Ahnmad Daud..called **Nilai Cinta**...how did we get this idea? We had a show in Malacca, Kassim, myself and some artists from Singapore...after the show we met a few girls...we were very popular and young, girls came after us...we brought the girls to the Malacca seaside...we sat with the moon overlooking the scenery...while we talked...Kassim Masdur came up with the idea for the song...**Antara bulan bintang beribu...manakala sama bulan yang satu...antara ribu bintang yang tebu di langit..di kau bintang hati ku**...the song based on this girl...when we chatted together...through experience, the song must come to me first....<sup>26</sup>*

Lyricists who collaborated on P.Ramlee's songs were Jamil Sulong, H.M.Rohaizad and S.Sudarmadji. Ramlee composed a variety of songs with a Hindi bear for the 1950s films made by directors of Indian descent. Once he was director, songs he produced had a keroncong rhythm, as in **Alunan Biola** from the film **Antara du Darjat**. The film **Semerah Padi** is an appropriate site for many songs which became very popular among the Malay community, for example, **Sekapur Sireh Seulas Pinang**, **Makan Sireh di Semerah Padi**, and **Lenggang Kangkong Baru**,

because they were accompanied by dances which by comparison with his previous work, seemed gentle and more graceful.<sup>27</sup>

When P.Ramlee films made by Indian directors contained dance sequences, many were choreographed by Edith Costello. This was to change as well. When P. Ramlee was working on the film Penarik Becha, he asked Habsah, mother of actress Hashimah Yon, who was an expert on dance and had toured Malaya with a theatre troupe since her youth. She recalled the Inang which was a Minangkabau dance that had a swaying movement. This was adapted to an “Inang baru” dance, performed by six couples, in traditional Malay costume, the choreography empathised Malay culture in movement. Suffice to say we are informed the Inang Baru dance took centre stage at every party, variety show or social gathering. Ramlee composed many songs in traditional Malay music such as inang, zapin, masri, asli, joget and boria.

Inang Bahru

Gambus jodoh (zapin)

Nak dara Rindu (traditional Malay)

Joget Pahang

Alunan Biola (keroncong)

He was also adept in appropriating a variety of external influences

Tidurku di Rumput Yang Basah (waltz)

Ya Habibi Ali Baba ( Middle Eastern influences)

Hoi-Hoi Ya-Hoi Lagu Penyamun (Chinese influences)

Nasi Goreng (samba)

Merak Kayangan (beguine)

Mengapa Riang Ria (andante)

Juwita (bolero)

Bila Larut Malam (rumba)

Putus Sudah Kaseh Sayang (slow beguine)

Hamidah (slow rumba)

Bunyi Gitar (twist)

Kwek Mambo (mambo)

Ramlee was popular as a lyricist for tongue-in-cheek songs like **Nasi Goreng**, **Maafkan Kami** and **Pok-Pok Bujang Lapok, Do Re Mi**. In the movie Laksemana Doremi [Admiral Doremi] which P.Ramlee directed in 1968, there was a scene showing the three main characters riding a magic carpet and singing a Japanese song, rendered heartily in Malay and Japanese, which many informants call “Miyatokai no Sora”. It is possible Ramlee picked up the song while attending

a Japanese school as a 14 year-old in Penang during the Japanese Occupation.<sup>28</sup> **On to Singapore** opened with a military unit advancing on bicycles towards Kuala Selangor “singing lustily all the way ‘Hashirei Hinomaru Ginrin Butai’ (advance Hinomaru Cyclists Corps)”, and concluded with the British surrender. Cinemas not able to obtain Japanese films screened *second and third run, Malai, Chinese and Indian films*.<sup>29</sup> Popular songs like **Di Pingiran, Entah di Mana** and **Assalamulaikum**. Ramlee gained credibility for his marching songs, which in the early Islamic period played a big role in arousing the spirit....Patriotic songs like **Pahlawanku, Perwira** and **Sekapuh Sireh**, all sung by Saloma. It is all the more likely that some lessons learnt during the Japanese Occupation may have helped Ramlee in working out such winsome strategies in his patriotic songs. The same seems to apply to **Joget Malaysia, Joget Pahang** and **Melaka**. Songs of advice like **Kenek-Kenek Udang, Rukun Islam** and **Tolong Kami**. Love ballads include **Merak Kayangan** and **Tidur-lah Permaisuri**. **Dendang Perantau** can be heard on radio and television during the Id celebrations. Weddings usually had **Renjis di Pilis, Merpati dua Sejoli** and **Selamat Pengantin Baru**.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, young Malays were more attracted to the Beatles, Venture, Cliff and the Shadows, the Rolling Stones and other pop idols. Ramlee formed a band called **Pancha Sitara** hoping to counteract the influence of the **Platters** and revitalise Malay music. **Pancha Sitara** was well received as were the songs **Bila Larut Malam** and **Mawar Ku** to name a few. If there was a time Ramlee was out of joint, this was probably it. A movement that appeared in the 1960s that had already been simmering with **Bill Haley and the Comets** and **Cliff Richard and the Shadows**, hit fever pitch in Singapore, especially with the **Cliff Richard and the Shadows** who gave a performance at the Happy World Stadium in 1961. Subsequently, most ensembles were to convert to the three guitars and one drummer configuration.<sup>31</sup> In fact, by the time M. Osman’s Suzanna appeared and emblazoned EP sales and radio airplay in 1963, Pop Yeh Yeh had emerged and continued into the late 1960s. Ramlee was quoted as saying *this kind of music placed importance only on the loudness of the music rather than the quality of the song itself...Poor quality pop songs and music will give rise to a future generation that is wild. Young people who sing as they please, play music as they please, dress themselves as they please will end up exposed to negative elements which will inevitably result in all ill discipline*.<sup>32</sup>

That, however, did not prevent Ramlee recording several songs based on kugiran<sup>33</sup> led by **Jefri Din, A. Ramli, L. Ramlee, S. Mariam, Jaafar O** among others. His own contributions were **Bunyi Gitar** from **Tiga Abdul** (1964) and **Ai Ai Twist** from **Masam-Masam Manis** of 1965.

On balance, Ramlee's concerns were the vocal quality of a song. Ramlee was not alone in this concern. Professional musicians in the world of jazz and popular culture, Sam Gan and Horace Wee believed that *the big culture shock to the musicians of the day...especially for those of us who became established...I think before the Beatles, Cliff Richard and the Shadows, the Ventures came to Singapore...and all of a sudden you have bass guitar...what's that? It was very loud...amplified sound...not as smooth, well-rounded and refined a sound...very raw...Horace Wee echoed similar sentiments If you describe it now, it did sound very raw...when it was first came on...it was in its infancy.....the players who played it weren't qualified musicians...they couldn't read...Half the time they couldn't even play the instrument...sometimes its good that way because that's how a new artform or practice evolves...when someone goes in blindly innocent...you don't now what's impossible...so that's why in those days it was loud...discordant...mainly because they didn't tune their instruments properly...it became a big shock to the professional musicians of that last twenty/thirty years...and of course it was greeted with great resentment...you remember when Sam talked about how in the heydays of the big band scene, there were always the quality musicians who could read music...and those who could not...this actually became the other way around...but then the professional musicians looked at these pop-up stars...and said they only played three chords...hardly in tune because they could hardly tune properly and they couldn't even read notes...there was a lot of tension between both parties...the rock n' roll musicians looked at the professionals with disdain...old men...and the professionals looked at these people and said something like a bunch of amateurs...and they weren't even amateurs.<sup>34</sup>*

Many more questions come to light surrounding this practice. Apart from oral accounts by those close to the Malay Film Industry and their star-performers, much of this practice reveals the need for photographs, contracts to produce music for film, correspondence, 78-rpm records, live recordings, recording in-situ, scripts, to name a few, to help corroborate this practice, its composers, performers and its audience.

## REFERENCES

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1 Harding, James and Sarji, Ahmad, P.Ramlee *The Bright Star*, Pelanduk Publications, Malaysia, 2002, with specific reference to chapter 2.

2 Ibid., p.19.

3 Ibid., p.19

4 *Bermadu* was a black and white pre-war film, among others like *Laila Majnun*, *Ibu Tiri*, *Tiga Kasih*, and *Terang Bulan Di Malaya*, the last of which had a song which eventually emerged as the National Anthem of Malaysia. *Laila Majnun* was directed by B.S. Rajhans and that was financed by the Motilal Chemical corporation from India. It is not certain if the others were similarly financed since MFP Productions by Shaw brothers according to one source was a post-war entity, although the Shaw Brothers were very successful in the pre-war period with film screening and cinema houses. By 1953, Shaw had two movie-houses, Rex theatre and Queens in Geylang Road, while Keris had the Odeon Katong.

5 There are two Momos cited in different sources. One is Momo Latif, the singer and references to him are found in Harding and Sarji, op.cit. However, the film in question, **Bermadu** is found in Mohd. Kamsah Sira: *Malay Film Industry in Singapore—its Beginning* in the proceedings of the *EWC-AMIC ASEAN FILM RESEARCH WORKSHOP, held in Singapore 6-8 September 1989*. The second presence of a Momo Karim, besides Sharid Medan, Momo Karim, Habsah and Tija just to mention a few, acting in those films had prior experience in *Bangsawan* or Malay traditional opera. It is likely that Momo Karim is the actor in question.

6 Interview with Tony Danker, 4 June 2004.

7 Tan Sooi Beng, *The 78 RPM Record Industry in Malaya Prior to World War II*, *Asian Music*, Vol. XXVIII, no.1, Fall/Winter 1996/7, pp.1-42, pp.17-18.

8 Interview with Tony Danker, 4 June 2004. Although I am unable to determine if the audience at MFP films were predominantly Straits Chinese, the evidence here suggests that the Shaw Brothers film industry was not supported by a Chinese majority in Singapore.

9 It seems that *Laila Majnun* was adapted from Sanskrit sources which was a tale about two ill-starred lovers.

10 The dates are a problematic because Mohd. Kamsah Sira credits Tsu Min for starting up Nusantara Film after Shaw brothers MFP. See *Malay Film Industry in Singapore—its Beginning*

11 Oral Interview with Yusnor Ef, 19 December 2003.

12 Harding and Sarji, op.cit. p.19.

13 Oral Interview with Yusnor Ef, 19 December 2003.

14 Oral Interview with Yusnor Ef, 19 December 2003.

15 Beamish, Tony, *Arts of Malaya 1954*, rev. 1981., Donald Moore, Singapore, pp.42-50, p.45.

16 Tamaki Marsuoka Kanda, *Indian Film Directors in Malaya*, pp.43-50, p.43, in Vasudev, Aruna (ed.) *Frames of Mind; Reflections on Indian Cinema*, UBS Publishers, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1995. Tamaki cites four reasons (p.50) for the presence of Indian directors in Singapore:

1. A much earlier developed Indian film industry;
2. Much cheaper to employ than Hollywood directors;
3. English as a language well-employed by the Indian directors; and
4. Familiarity with the Malay Peninsula because of the large number of Indian immigrants.

- 17 Lent, John, et al., *The Asian Film Industry*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1990, pp. 185—200.
- 18 Lent, John, et al., *The Asian Film Industry*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1990, pp. 185—200, p.189.
- 19 Harding and Sarji, *op.cit.* p.27.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p.21.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p.28
- 22 *Ibid.*, p.41
- 23 Oral interview with Yusnor Ef, 29 December 2003.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Harding and Sarji, *op.cit.*, p.213.
- 26 Oral Interview with Yusnor Ef, 19 and 26 December 2003.
- 27 Harding and Sarji, *op.cit.*, p. 214.
- 28 Abu Talib Ahmad, *Malay-Muslims, Islam and the Rising Sun: 1941-1945*, Monograph 34, MBRAS 2003, pp.63-65.
- 29 Syonan Shinbun, 13 January 2603, 7 April 2603, 1 September 2603, 10 September 2603, 24 September 2603, in Kratoska, Paul H., *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, a Social and Economic history*, Allen& Unwin., p.142.
- 30 Harding and Sarji, *op.cit.*, p.219.
- 31 Burhanudin bin Buang, *Pop Yeh Yeh music in Singapore, 1963-1971 Academic Exercise*, National University of Singapore, 2000 with particular reference to Chapter two.
- 32 Harding and Sarji, *op.cit.*, 215-216
- 33 *Ibid.*, p.217.
- 34 Interview with Sam Gan and Horace Wee, 9 January 2004.