THE ORIGINAL OF MALAY SONGS (OMS) AS THE SYMBOLISM OF MALAY CULTURAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

The Original of Malay Songs (OMS) is a music song genre which has a long history background since the presence of Rubaiyat Arts and traditional poetry in the peninsula of North Sumatera since the 16th century. This investigation made to find out the musical culture and the Indonesian Archipelago songs and particularly to the Original of Malay Songs which have become heritage for Malay Nations and Malay lovers in all over the world. As the form of culture studies by Malay people from generation to generation for centuries. OMS is a symbolic nature from musical communication use either informal or formal. Therefore, this investigation is a research framework of OMS as the symbolism of cultural heritage traditionally. This investigation involved job field by using semi-structured interview technique to collect further data then processed by implementing analytic-descriptive method. Data gained from four legendaric people of OMS then studied by implementing literature study method and elaboration of note field. In the end, the product of this research is a description on how OMS as the symbolism of Malay Cultural Heritage gained hereditary from generation to generations.

Keywords: Original Malay Songs, Symbolism, Heritage, Culture, Malay.

Introduction

Singing for particular people, including Malay people is a special activity as the cultural communication media. This is based on what says by Minnete Mans (2009): “A Song, similar with other human expression, is a habit pattern learnt, as something usual for cultural man. Singing is a special activity of a communication.”

As the form of culture learnt by Malay people from generation to generations for centuries, OMS is a symbolic nature from a musical communication. However, this symbolism has drowned by much changes of people behavior based on the development of era. Unfortunately, these changes incline ignoring cultural symbolism on OMS. This phenomenon caused cultural symbolism meaning from this genre has manipulated based on industry demand as a product in the popular music market.

In the context of spreading OMS as the symbolism of Malay culture, it is related to the shared feeling from various Malay culture wherever they are. Minnete Mans (2009) used the terms of “Imagined society” like he said music has role for unity and community of a society, even for an imagined society. Related to the spreading of this genre to many areas in South East Asia, Mans’s opinion from Alan Lomax (2009) says, mix of songs genre in all Malay world with the process of human migration indirectly describe the history of spreading the culture itself”. This opinion clearly stated of shared feelings of Malay people wherever they are for their believe to NLMA as the form of cultural communication between them.

Music is not only as the symbolism of culture but also as a universal language or not, is not the main attention but should admit that music is a form of language to communicate. According to Umberto Eco, as stated by Downing A Thomas (1995) said that, music is other type of language that has articulation system itself, more free and structured differently. Here clearly giving understanding that OMS also as cultural symbol of Malay Nation function as communication language between Malay nation. It is probably also this
communication language understand by other nations, because as a communication language OMS opens to learn. According to Claude Levi-Strauss in Anna Herbert (2010) stated that many understand as something related to social system. Based on those statements, thus would like to find out how OMS inherited traditionally.

The Methodology
Data collecting techniques in this research used, were semi-structured interview, literature study and field note study. Related to the research methodology, this research begins with investigating traditionally inherited do by legendaris singers of OMS popular in their gold era around 1960s those are: Dato’ Tan Sri S.M. Salim dan Aspalela Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), Nur’Ainun (Medan, Indonesia) dan Tengku Hamidah (Pekanbaru, Indonesia) as the informants of this research to their students. Data related with the terms, contents and the golden rules gained have been recorded without any change. This process is one of qualitative research methodology do by following emic perspective. This emic perspective activity in this study also related with study of practical aspect and treatments. In this study, what means as practical aspect are observing and recorded behavior and version showed by informants at the time of singing OMS.

Based on those statements, in this research has studied based on subject, that is OMS with data collecting technique focused on Riau and Medan (Indonesia) also Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). The next step had done research between some singing genre by informants to put into the technique of OMS. The outline above explained that this research used comprehensive emic research. The research then continue by observation to the style and singing techniques of informants.

Related with the research’s aims, to get description on how OMS inherited traditionally. Through this emic research explained above, thus for this aim, the research basically grouped into a qualitative research.

Discussion
After did a field research through interview method with some legendarius figures of OMS, thus gained important findings as the characters and concepts of OMS in the inherited traditionally outline below:

1. The understanding of individual style in singing OMS based on voice quality
   - The musical style of OMS is not based on national difference, therefore there is no Malaysian style, Indonesian Style or other national style. Particular local style such as Medan style which is more known as Deli Malay Song, In Riau often says as Original Malay Song and in Melaka often says as Original Malay Rhytme. This local style is generally signed by a few of difference to the rhythmic pattern to musical instrumen of Kendang/Tamborine. Therefore this supported the research findings, that the difference of style the most allow from the individual style of the singer is related to the voice quality from every OMS singer.
   - In the arts of singing OMS, individual seniority only gained by a singer if he or she has passed some musical experiences. Puan Nur Ainun, a legend of OMS singer from Medan who now aged 82 years old told that he used to study continously to get seniority of individual style. He said also that expression of traditional poetry texts must very deep made him has singing style individually more expressive.
   - It is different with Tengku Hamidah, legenda of OMS singer from Pekanbaru Riau. He stated that singing seniority of individual style gained by often listening to songs from the past legend. Therefore he used to listen vocal voice from Rosiah Chik, Rafeah Buang and Kamariah Noor. Every time he listens their songs, the heart of Tengku Hamidah often touch his feeling as the sign he is very inspire their songs. Then he admitted that he followed the way legend singers in singing thus himself gained special individual seniority singing he has now.
Puan Aspalela, Legend of OMS from Kampung Baru, Selangor, also has interesting individual experience. In singing she is not study to anyone or never study formally but by learnt to sing from the radio continuously to get seniority of voice quality of her individual singing style. She has a loud voice and appropriate for singing original songs. Those are the special individual style have by singers at that time.

S.M Salim, because of his skills in singing OMS and because his carrier as the famous singer also has much contribution to the Kingdom, thus he gained noble title Tan Sri from Sultan Selangor. S.M Salim has gold voice, thus he admired by the society. In his popularity, S.M Salim has many fans everywhere he sings a song. Salim has good voice quality since he was born, good voice without any weakness, add with his musicality ability, make him appropriate to be the famous singer. And also Salim is good in reciting Al-Qur’an since his childhood in Aceh, thus his melismatic in singing the Original Song developed with his ability to recite the holy of Al-Qur’an.

All opinion on individual sytle in the voice quality are exceptable. It is agree with the opinions says by Lilli Lehman (2006), a vocalist teacher in Prague Conservatory, who says that: “It is very important for all who wish to become artists to begin their work not with practical exercises in singing, but with serious practice in tone production…”

Thus the opinion of voice quality cited above has proved the truth of our informants on the importance of practice to get their voice quality. Although informants have their own way in practicing to get the voice quality, but generally they have the same experiences, that is practice informal to follow their seniors. They gained it by adopting. Voice quality is individual character gain naturally, it is impossible there are two man who have the same voice quality. It is similar with human face although twins identically must be difference in their face.

2. The understanding of individual style in singing OMS based on melismatic (Cengkok or Lenggok)

Melismatic is the general term uses in OMS. The using of this term to particular area has different name for example in Malaysia, the term of cengkok generally named as Lenggok term. Sometime also says as the term of bunga-bunga melodi or melody best part. Although there is difference of the term but it has the same function that is to gracious melody rhythm of song. OMS will feel less gracious if singing without using melismatic. Melismatic is the special characteristics adhered and specific in OMS. The expertise of an OMS singer can be seen from his or her melismatic individual style.

Nur Ainun explained that melismatic is a song depending on the expression of the song texts itself. In OMS, the right melismatic has soft nuance and have melismatic pitch. Thus what did by Nur Ainun at the time he made melismatic with personal character, thus make it different with other.

While according to Tengku Hamidah, melismatic is more to the highest musical expression and a special character of OMS. From the melismatic we can see the difference between good Malay song and bad Malay Song. Tengku used to learnt from his idol singers songs at that time and of course influence him in determining individual style in singing OMS. I would not allowed to explain the words, but melismatic is the product of our soul expression. He believes that without ultra sensitive expression, good melismatic is impossible to gain by the singer, He said.

Aspalela Abdullah has his own argumentation related to melismatic in OMS. According to him, he has to create his own identity in the time of singing OMS. But all of it should need practices to accomplish. By always listening to melismatic from the
previous singers and learning to change the suitable melismatic for myself.

S.M Salim has interesting opinion to melismatic of OMS. He said the difficulties in singing OMS. We should be clever in melismatic the Original Malay Song in which the melody is not in the notation therefore melismatic of OMS is individual style, which means every singer has his or her own style depending on his or her creativity in making ornamentation for the present song melody.

3. The understanding of individual style in singing OMS based on articulation

The song articulation or saying the words in song lyrics of OMS is unique because it is different with saying daily formal language. How our legendary man in this research give opinion on the song articulation of OMS. Below the result of interview recorded for the need of this research.

On the case of articulation in the lyrics of OMS said by Nur Ainun as something which determine in expressing to sing OMS. It means that the right articulation or spelling will make the meaning of lyrics more clear for the listeners. It is easy to say but actually hard to do. To get it need routine and consistent vocal practice thus the clearness of articulation really gained. In this case do not valid the term of got from talent thus articulation need to gain by consistent vocal practice.

Similar to Tengku Hamidah opinion specifically says the importance of vocal practice to get good articulation in singing. “We must practice vocal everyday for a long time until we feel releave to make good articulation, then we can start to sing”

Meanwhile Aspalela Abdullah opinion on vocal articulation in OMS also is similar with above statements. For him the most important is practice consistently and stay away from making the voice bad particularly voice stroke, he says “Eating particular fruits before singing may cause caugh and eating oiled foods may cause very bad voice stroke. We should avoid that” He explained.

S.M Salim stated more specific that he believes that his vocal skills gained from his experience to recite Al-Qur’an since his childhood. It is not only melismatic but also his articulation he trusts has gained from long practice when he in process to recite the holy of Al-Quran. The way to practice articulation he said should pay attention to the originality of the song (the meaning of lyrics) by listening it many times thus clear all articulation and the expression. “If try to sing OMS should be very carefull on how to do it right” he says. Then to sing OMS also demands full concentration, because often we lost concentration we might be will go to other song lyrics, He says. For the researcher, what means by full concentration by Salim must be related with good articulation, because without it of course the lyrics of traditional poetry will be not clear and the meaning of the song become unclear also.

4. The Expression in singing Original Malay Song

Speaking of expression in NLMA, first of all need to record that knowledge of appropriate musical song introduction demands the singer expert in remembering songs melody. If this is not mastered, thus a singer will lose the main melody of the song and will go to other melody song. It need to know that in particular OMS. The introduction melody music is function more essential than only as an introduction. It is more as a guide in directing singer to the real melody. The four informants give the same opinion on this case.

In the last interviewed, Tengku Hamidah gave example for the truth. The wrong song introduction will make the singer to sing other song also. “The sensitvity of the introduction song melody than the play of Original Malay Song”. Says Tengku Hamidah. She has also a bright idea that the presence of notation will help a lot of musical players. “Thus if there is
notation, the musical players will able to play the right music,” She says.

After the step of understanding related to this introduction music, thus the next important step before expressing to sing OMS is the step of understanding the texts of song. Brilliant opinion from Nur Ainun in this case he says that: “ The melismatic oscillation is the result of words expression singing. If we able to express the meaning want to give, thus it make better to oscillate the melismatic”. From the opinion we can interpret that the importance relationship of melismatic with the lyrics of songs. Why? According to Ainun this is because the very strong relationship between feelings, emotion and our expression at the time of singing the song texts of OMS.

Meanwhile, further more related to the expression in singing OMS, the similar important opinion from S.M Salim. Although it has not proved the truth, but this opinion is really phenomenal, because it need further research on that. According to his opinion text expression and melismatic may result from practice by imitating intonation for example like reading The Holy of Al-Qur’an. “ The intonation is not the same for all song, thus reading text or song lyrics of OMS like we do for reciting Al-Quran. We interpret each word in the song lyrics, this one like that and this one like this the melismatic,” Thus says by legendary man S.M Salim on the way he expresses as similar with the way of reciting Al-Qur’an. The ways he stated it needs a very high concentration.

Only Aspalela Abdullah who is not give opinion about that matter, although he also admits the importance of understanding song texts as the basic expression in singing OMS. Even fatal error may happen if the musical players are not cooperated with the singer. He ever experienced in one day, he said “The song of “Jalak Lenteng/The Lenteng Starling” he sang give ending with other song musical entitled “Laksamana Mati Dibunuh/The Admiral was killed” by his musical players. Thus he was not comfort with that time. It should be not happen, He says”.

The Role of Traditional Poetry In OMS
The researcher would like to give note on the role of traditional poetry in OMS texts. It need to note that without traditional poetry there will ever exist the history of OMS. The importance role of traditional poetry, it might be say there is no OMS without traditional poetry, it proves that the arts of OMS depending fully on the gracious of traditional poetry arts. Therefore, first of all a singer of OMS must understand the meaning of traditional poetry, the singer should able to make traditional poetry if asks based on the condition at the time to sing a song.

If we observe in depth from some examples of traditional poetry in OMS, here as like explaining that entire life aspects of Malay people can be described by traditional poetry. Traditional poetries although short but the meaning has deep meaning. Malay people from the old time ago until now still make traditional poetry as one of entertainment media. Songs style, dance, zapin and Mistress as the form of OMS for example, the traditional poetry become the main lyrics and it use forever until now.

CONCLUSION
As the form of culture studies by Malay people from generation to generations for centuries, OMS or Original Malay Song is the symbolic nature from a musical communication. In the context of spreading OMS as the symbolic of Malay culture, it has shared feeling from many Malay culture people wherever they are. The traditional rules to sing OMS do inherited according the informants the most important thing is to understand individual style in producing voice. Musical style of OMS is not different based on national difference, thus there is no Malaysian style, Indonesian Style or other national styles. Particular local style for example Medan Style knows as Deli Malay Song, in Riau often says as Nyanyian Melayu Asli or Original Malay Song and in Melaka often says as Rentak Melayu Asli or Original Malay Rhytm. Therefore, these findings clearly stated this research, that the
difference of style which can be seen is the singer individual style, related to voice quality of each individual singer OMS. This rule what should pay attention by candidate singers of OMS, to pay attention to individual style the importance of voice quality.

Then discussed on the melismatic product of voice from the soul expression. Melismatic is the highest product from the soul expression of lyrics or musical text thus become high value musical expression. Without ultra sensitive expression, good melismatic will not be a good singer. Because it is not written in the notation, thus melismatic of OMS is individual character, the meaning of each singer has his or her own style, depending on his or her creativity to make an ornamentation for the song melody present.

In OMS, the ability to make good articulation or diction is the part of vocal technique united. This is the most important part in mastering other vocal techniques beside ability to control the strengths or weaknesses of song dynamics, accent, softness and various voice quality wanted in the singing expression.

But it should be remember that vocal technique in OMS is unique because different in contradiction with articulation technique to bel canto singing. This is because of cultural taboo which stated that Malay females are not allowed to open the mouth widely when speaking or singing. Based on it, thus articulation of OMS should keep as the clear articulation by holding herself not to open the mouth extremelly.

It might be says that there is no OMS without traditional poetry proves that OMS arts depends fully to the gracious of traditional poetry. Therefore, first of all a singer of OMS must understand the meaning of traditional poetry, both of them and must able to make traditional poetry whenever asks in condition of time presenting to sing a song.

Reference