

**Music and media in the Dutch East Indies:
Gramophone records and radio in the late colonial era, 1903-1942**

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Abstract

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Music

This dissertation is intended as an ethnomusicological contribution to the history of music and media in Indonesia. It deals with topics and resources that have never been systematically examined for this region: gramophone records and radio broadcasting from the years before World War II, the last years of Dutch colonial control. The gramophone records are our only documentation of the *sound* of Indonesian music in the years before World War II. This dissertation tries to identify (and to some extent provide) the information one needs in order to understand the records and, by extension, stylistic trends during the pre-war period. Ultimately it is meant as an argument for the importance of making use of historical recordings and discography in ethnomusicology.

The use of gramophone records from before World War II (“78s”) in musicology and ethnomusicology is growing. Robert Philip has done a careful study (1992) of changes in performance practice in European art music, based on comparisons of early gramophone records with later practice; Ali Jihad Racy’s dissertation (1977) is an extensive examination of the changes in Egyptian music documented in recordings; Sean Williams has a section in her 2001 book on what recordings tell about early practice of *tembang Sunda*; and Philip Schuyler

(1984), Anne Sheeran (1997), Regula Qureshi (1999), Steven Hughes (2002), and Amanda Weidman (2006) have all looked at what Qureshi calls “gramophone culture” in reference to specific genres or categories of music in, respectively, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and, for both Hughes and Weidman, South India. The chapters here on *kroncong* and on the trajectories of popular music genres (chapters 5 and 6) are studies in this vein. The other chapters, however, seek to put these genre studies into the larger context of *all* the music recorded for the DEI and the music broadcast on DEI radio. This is perhaps the most unusual feature of the dissertation: it draws on the results of tabulations summarizing the entire range of record production and radio broadcasting in the DEI, and it combines those results with musicological understandings of genre and idiom to study the nature, processes, and aftermath of mediatization.

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TERMINOLOGY, CONVENTIONS, & ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS FOR THE REGION: IMS, DEI, M/S

This dissertation is concerned with music and media in the region designated by the abbreviation **IMS**. In reference to the colonial era (ending in 1942), this abbreviation stands for three colonies: the Dutch East Indies; the **Malay States**, Federated and Unfederated; and the **Straits Settlements**, namely Singapore, Malacca, and Penang. Conveniently, the abbreviation also works for the independent states those colonies became after World War II: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Two other abbreviations are used throughout: **DEI**, for the Dutch East Indies, and **M/S**, for the Malay States and Singapore.

TERMS FOR SOCIAL GROUPS

Pribumi. I use this term for all inhabitants of the DEI who were not from somewhere else, either actually or conceptually. Thus it excludes Europeans, Arabs, pure-blood Chinese (“Chinese from China”), and the census category “Other Asians.” All of these groups were born outside the DEI. People who were *conceptually* from elsewhere, such as pure-blood Europeans born in the DEI, and, most importantly, the Peranakan Chinese, born of mixed Chinese and Pribumi parentage, are not now (in Indonesian discourse) and were not then (in colonial racial taxonomy) considered Pribumi. The term is denotatively the exact equivalent of the Dutch *inlander* or the English *native*, but it does not have the pejorative connotations sometimes attached to those words.

Peranakan and Totok. The “Chinese” in the DEI were conventionally divided into two groups: the **Peranakan**, whose ancestors had come to the islands generations earlier as laborers; and the **Totok**, who had come more recently as traders and businessmen. At the time of the main influx of Chinese laborers, only men were allowed into the colony; they intermarried with Pribumi women and over time lost their Chinese language and become oriented more to the Indies than to China. (The word *peranakan* has several meanings, but in this context it means “of mixed race,” and can be applied to Arabs and Eurasians as well as Chinese.) The **Totok**, on the other hand, coming at a time of looser immigration, often brought women with them; accordingly they married within their own group and retained more of their language and culture, as well as their orientation to China rather than the Indies.

Eurasian and Indo. Analytically, **Eurasian** should mean anyone of mixed European and Asian parentage. In practice in the DEI, however, it was used only for persons whose father was European and whose mother was Pribumi or Chinese. If the children of such a union were acknowledged by their father, they were classified as Europeans. If mixed children were not recognized, or if their mother rather than their father was the European parent, then they were legally classified as Pribumi or Chinese. (These distinctions no longer have any legal application.) Thus *Eurasian* has two meanings, depending on whether one understands it as a legal term describing civil status in the colonial era or as an analytical term referring to racial admixture. In this work, context should make it clear which meaning is intended. **Indo** is an informal term for Eurasians (in either sense of that word). In the colonial era *Indo* could be

used both pejoratively and neutrally, but today it seems to be neutral or positive. Indo children, for example, are said to be likely to become movie stars, because they are so good-looking.

Rakyat designates a class rather than a racial group: it is the mass of common people as distinguished from the elite and the aristocrats; the led rather than the leaders. Because most inhabitants of the DEI (and of Indonesia today) were (or are) Pribumi, the *rakyat* is largely Pribumi; but anyone who is of the “common folk” is of the rakyat.

TRADITIONAL

Considered by some a vitiated, contaminated term, for me it has a clear and useful meaning, which I sketched in a 2001 article, “Can the traditional arts survive, and should they?” In reference to Indonesia, I imagine a continuum, at one end of which, the “wholly traditional” end, is music that shows no obvious foreign (extra-Indonesian: Western, Middle Eastern, Indian, Chinese) influence in its musical idiom (“idiom” consisting of elements such as scales, modes, structures, timbres, ornamentation, meters, rhythmic gestures, and melodic contours). At the other end of the continuum is music that is wholly foreign in idiom. (A key word here is “obvious”: “traditional” does not mean isolated, untouched by any contact with other musics, but rather music that incorporates and submerges outside influences within its own distinctive idiom.) Between the poles are the hybrid forms, some closer to one end, some closer to the other. Traditional is not more valuable than foreign or hybrid; but to the extent that the traditional is rejected or dismissed *because it is not foreign*—because it remains what it was and has not assimilated to a more glamorous or powerful foreign idiom—then I am on the side of the traditional, believing that there is intrinsic value in diversity, be it genetic, linguistic, cultural, or musical.

INDONESIAN, MALAY, MELAYU

In this work, I call the lingua franca of colonial IMS Malay. After the Oath of Youth (the *Sumpah Pemuda*, October 1928), people agitating for the DEI’s independence from Holland called their language Indonesian (and their desired nation Indonesia), but in practice most people—including record producers—continued to call the language Malay. It was only after independence was declared in 1945 that “Indonesian” became the only acceptable name for the language spoken in the former DEI (while of course in M/S the language continued to be called Malay or Melayu). Nowadays, when what is essentially the same language is called Indonesian in Indonesia and Malay in Malaysia and Singapore, it is sometimes necessary to refer to that language as Indonesian/Malay or Malay/Indonesian.

I call the colonial-era lingua franca Malay and not Melayu (as the word would be pronounced in both Malaysia and Indonesia) in order to reduce confusion between the lingua franca of two colonies and the name of the ethnic group, Melayu, who live both in Malaysia/Singapore and in Sumatra.

ORTHOGRAPHY

Colonial-era orthography was based on Dutch. The sound **u** (as in English *glue*) was written **oe**, **j** represented English **y** as in *you*, **tj** represented **ch** as in *church*, and **dj** represented **j** as in *jug*. In 1947, as Indonesia fought for its independence from Holland, **oe** was officially replaced by **u** in Indonesian orthography. In 1972 an official spelling reform was enacted for Indonesian, whereby **tj** became **c**, **dj** became **j**, and **j** became **y**. Thus, for example, **Djakarta** was spelled **Jakarta** after 1972, and **wajang** was spelled **wayang**.

In this study, my practice is to spelling “as is” when quoting from a pre-1972 text or when giving a person’s name. (The spelling reforms of 1947 and 1972 did not require people to change the spelling of their name.) When speaking in my own voice, I use the reformed spelling of 1972.

TRANSLATIONS

Translations from Indonesian/Malay, Dutch, and Javanese are my own unless otherwise noted.

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

Aside from the abbreviations for the geographical regions (IMS, DEI, M/S) discussed above, other abbreviations used in this work, mostly for radio stations, are:

BRV	Bataviase Radiovereeniging (Batavia Radio Association)
CIRVO	Chineesche en Inheemsche Radioluisteraars Vereniging Oost Java (Association of Chinese and Native Radio Listeners of East Java [Surabaya])
HMV	His Master’s Voice (record label of The Gramophone Company, Ltd.)
MAVRO	Mataramsche Vereeniging voor Radio Omroep (Mataram Association for Radio Broadcasting [Yogyakarta])
NIROM	Nederlands Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij (Netherlands Indies Radio Broadcasting Company)
PPRK	Perikatan Perkoempoelan Radio Ketimoeran (Federation of Eastern Radio Associations [Batavia])
RRI	Radio Republik Indonesia
SRI	Siaran Radio Indonesia (Indonesian Radio Broadcasting [Surakarta])
SRV	Solosche Radio Vereeniging (Solo Radio Association [Surakarta])
VORL [#1]	Vereeniging van Oostersche Radio Luisteraars (Association of Eastern Radio Listeners, Batavia [in late 1934 changed name to VORO])
VORL [#2]	Vereeniging voor Oostersche Radio Luisteraars (Association for Eastern Radio Listeners, Bandung [from late 1935])
VORO	Vereeniging voor Oostersche Omroep (Association for Eastern Broadcasting, Batavia)

DEDICATION

to my wife and son, who sustain me and enrich me

Tinuk Yampolsky
Arif Robert Yampolsky

in memory of my parents, who shaped me

Marian Y. Callow (1919-1989)
Robert Yampolsky (1920-1987)
Roy V. Callow (1918-2008)

and in memory of the friend and mentor who set me on this road

Nicholas M. England (1923-2003)

Bix to Buxtehude to Boulez,
The little white dog on the Victor label
Listens long and hard as he is able.
It's all in a day's work, whatever plays.

—James Merrill, *from* “The Victor Dog” (1972)

Let no one imagine that in owning a recording he has the music. The very practice of music
. . . is a celebration that we own nothing.

—John Cage, “Lecture on Something” (ca. 1950)

Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Installment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A gramophone, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.

—W. H. Auden, *from* “The unknown citizen” (1939)

There is no way out of the game of culture.

—Bourdieu, *Distinction* (1979)



Map of present-day Indonesia (co-terminous with colonial-era Dutch East Indies).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is intended as an ethnomusicological contribution to the history of music and media in Indonesia. It deals with topics and resources that have never been systematically examined for this region: gramophone records and radio broadcasting from the years before World War II, the last years of Dutch colonial control. The gramophone records are our only documentation of the *sound* of Indonesian music in the years before World War II. This dissertation tries to identify (and to some extent provide) the information one needs in order to understand the records and, by extension, stylistic trends during the pre-war period. Ultimately it is meant as an argument for the importance of making use of historical recordings and discography in ethnomusicology.

The use of gramophone records from before World War II (“78s”) in musicology and ethnomusicology is growing. Robert Philip has done a careful study (1992) of changes in performance practice in European art music, based on comparisons of early gramophone records with later practice; Ali Jihad Racy’s dissertation (1977) is an extensive examination of the changes in Egyptian music documented in recordings; Sean Williams has a section in her 2001 book on what recordings tell about early practice of *tembang Sunda*; and Philip Schuyler (1984), Anne Sheeran (1997), Regula Qureshi (1999), Steven Hughes (2002), and Amanda Weidman (2006) have all looked at what Qureshi calls “gramophone culture” in reference to specific genres or categories of music in, respectively, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and, for

both Hughes and Weidman, South India. The chapters here on *kroncong* and on the trajectories of popular music genres (chapters 5 and 6) are studies in this vein. The other chapters, however, seek to put these genre studies into the larger context of *all* the music recorded for the DEI and the music broadcast on DEI radio. This is perhaps the most unusual feature of the dissertation: it draws on the results of tabulations summarizing the entire range of record production and radio broadcasting in the DEI, and it combines those results with musicological understandings of genre and idiom to study the nature, processes, and aftermath of mediatization. (Its closest ancestor is Racy's dissertation.)

This work is not actually a discography—a listing of discs—though it is a result of years of work on a discography-to-be, one listing all the known records made for IMS before 1942, on all labels. There are a few discographies of comparable scope, or at least *similar* scope. My eventual work will be nowhere near as extensive as Richard K. Spottswood's monumental seven-volume *Ethnic Music on Records: A Discography of Ethnic Recordings Produced in the United States, 1893 to 1942* (1990), but it will perhaps be comparable to Cristóbal Díaz Ayala's two-volume *Cuba Canta y Baila: Discografía de la Música Cubana* (1994), running from 1898 to 1960. In my research I have taken as a model—and a source of much information—Michael Kinnear's discographies of Gramophone Company recordings in India (1994, 2000); he focuses on only one label, but it is the one that outnumbered all others in record production in India until well after Independence.¹ But these are all *discographies*, and none of them attempts to couple its discographical information with either musical or cultural analysis—with, in short, ethnomusicology.

¹ Sadly, Kinnear, for unexplained reasons, abandoned his project after finishing the 1908-10 volume and, rumor has it, disposed of his materials and destroyed the remaining stock of his published books.

This work, in contrast, seeks to understand the mapping of Indonesian music into media as a project with musical and cultural dimensions and effects. It is not complete; it does not give a comprehensive picture of those dimensions for all the genres of music that were incorporated into late-colonial media in the DEI. Rather it tries to show the *nature* of recordings and radio as a source of music-historical information, what can be found there and what cannot.

Methodologically it is improvised and *ad hoc*; its methods were developed in the course of the research and were designed to cope with the specific challenges of the IMS material. I make one basic assumption, with methodological implications: that the record companies published what they thought consumers would buy.² (I make a similar assumption for radio: that the stations broadcast what they thought their subscribers wanted to hear.) Sometimes record companies experimented, but if sales did not justify the experiment they terminated it. Thus not only do the records indicate the companies' hypotheses of consumer-class taste, but the genres produced in quantity indicate the companies' belief that the hypotheses had been confirmed. (This is one justification for my quantitative studies of record production and radio broadcasting: the statistics offer a map of audience taste.)

The basic assumption has a corollary: changes in the recordings of certain genres over time indicate efforts by the record industry (and by performers) to adjust to consumer taste, and these efforts are validated—or not—by record sales, which in turn (in the absence of sales

² There was no equivalent, in DEI record publishing, of the cross-subsidy that enabled Smithsonian Folkways to publish such worst-sellers as the *Music of Indonesia* CD series (Yampolsky 1991-99). In addition to the Ford Foundation and Smithsonian Folkways, I should thank Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Ella Jenkins for unwittingly funding the publication of my records.

data) are reflected in continued production of recordings in the changed style.³ We cannot assume that the record companies and radio stations were always correct about all of the tastes of the public, and that the genres they recorded were the only ones the public might have wanted to hear. The companies might have missed something. But we can assume that they accurately read audience response to the records they did produce, producing more of the records the audience liked and not continuing to produce records that did not sell. (Again, the same assumption holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for the genres broadcast on radio.)

On the basis of the fundamental assumption and its corollary, we can “read back” from patterns evident in the records and broadcasts, looking for explanations of those patterns in the tastes of the consumer class, and we can develop hypotheses about the outlines of class competition and the fault lines of colonial society.

The gramophone records are our only documentation of the *sound* of Indonesian music in the years before World War II. (There are a few published accounts in newspapers or memoirs, but they are indicative mainly of social context; if they discuss the musical sound at all they do so in an impressionistic and often derogatory manner.) What I try to do in this dissertation is to identify (and to some extent provide) the information we need in order to understand the records. We need, I believe, to know the scope (repertoire, performers, locations) of any genres we are interested in; and we need to know who was *not* recorded in those genres; and what other genres were recorded along with that genre; and what genres

³ This corollary will not work everywhere. It will not work if new niche markets are opening up, as for example with country blues in the US. We cannot assume that the audience for “classic” or “vaudeville” blues (Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey) actually preferred the “downhome” sound of Charlie Patton or Blind Lemon Jefferson who were recorded only in the second phase of blues recording. For one thing, the country blues recordings did not eclipse the classic blues. Instead, record producers marketed country blues to a new segment of consumers who had not been targeted before.

were *not* recorded. In summary, we need to be able to place individual recordings in the context of their genres, and genres in the context of the whole field of music recorded for the DEI.

Because the records are documents, we must understand them *as documents*. The key is to establish their chronological sequence, and for this we need to decipher the information presented by the records themselves. The most important information is usually conveyed by the record numbers: the issue numbers (also called catalogue numbers) printed on the labels, and the matrix numbers, which are usually stamped or engraved in the “run-off groove” surrounding the labels. (Sometimes they are also printed on the labels, and sometimes they are stamped or engraved *under* the labels.) These numbers typically belong to series assigned by the record publishers, and information about when a given series was used can help one to date a record. For example, Odeon used the 91000 issue series only for its first two tours of the DEI, in 1907-09; next it used the 26000 series (1911-12), and after that a trio of series with six-digit numbers (112000, 114000, 115000—skipping 113000 for superstitious reasons?).

The issue number or catalogue number was an external interface between the publisher and the retailers and distributors; the latter ordered copies of the record from the former using that number. The matrix number was, in contrast, the publisher’s internal number, assigned sequentially during a recording session; it enabled the record company to keep track of each recording and its identifying information during the production process. Each recording—that is, each side of a two-sided disc—had its own matrix number, typically independent of the issue



Figure 1.1. Top: a Columbia GJX label showing the issue number (GJX 5), the matrix number printed on the label (WVX 9), and the placement of the matrix number (circled here) in the run-off groove. / Bottom: detail of the matrix number (WVX 10-1) from the reverse side of the same disc.

number. (A side already published with one issue number might be republished later with a different issue number, but the matrix number would remain the same.)

Figure 1.1 shows the label area of a Columbia disc. The issue number is GJX 5. The matrix number of the side shown in the upper panel is WVX 9. Matrix numbers were sometimes printed right on the label, as here, but more commonly they were engraved in the run-off area and not printed on the label. The lower panel of Figure 1.1 shows an engraved matrix number; as it happens, this is the matrix number of the reverse side of the disc shown in the upper panel.

The matrix number here is rich in information. The circled W indicates that the recording was made electrically, using the Western Electric system introduced in 1925 (later in IMS)—and thus the recording predates other Columbia records with matrix numbers beginning with C, which stands for the proprietary Columbia (Blumlein) recording system, introduced in 1931. It also postdates Columbia’s acoustic IMS recordings, which had either an S prefix or no letter prefix at all. The V in the series prefix distinguishes the WV series from series for other countries, and the X distinguishes this 12” disc from the ordinary 10” discs with prefix WV. The number 10 indicates that this was the tenth recording in the WVX matrix series—enabling discographers to place it precisely in the sequence of the recording session. The final element, —1, is the “take number,” indicating that the published recording was the first attempt made by the performers.⁴

⁴ The issue number is rather less informative, since it was not assigned during the recording session and had to do simply with publishing strategies. Records were often released without regard to the sequence of issue numbers. Printed catalogues and advertisements usually provide only the issue number, not the matrix number; these printed sources are valuable in establishing when records went on the market.

Other information may be conveyed by the text of the label or the logo. Sometimes the information aids in dating the record—for example, different forms of the publishing company’s name can be matched to corporate history—but in other cases, as in Figure 1.1, the information is contextual: the elaborate logo for GJX 5, showing Kala (the god of time, ready to devour us all; Kala is a common figure above the doorways of Javanese temples and palaces) and the monogram MN (standing for the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta), coupled with Columbia’s “magic notes” trademark, indicates Columbia’s exclusive contract with the Mangkunegaran. Columbia traded on the prestige of the court and its musicians, issuing the expensive 12” discs only for Mangkunegaran recordings and designing this special label for them.

For a complete contextualization of the recorded sources, we would need to know also to what extent the practice on records matched the practice in real life, on the ground. But evidence for on-the-ground practice is very hard to find now, and probably for the most part impossible. The people who remembered the way they sang and danced in the 1920s and 1930s are mostly dead now, and contemporary newspapers and magazines often did not bother to report on ordinary, everyday entertainment unless there was a newsworthy element to it, like a fight or a scandal. The data on radio broadcasting of live music, however, do offer an important corrective to the picture given by the records, revealing performers who were not recorded and providing details about live performance.

I cannot claim to give a full picture of the mapping of music into media in the DEI. But I hope to have shown the dimensions and the limitations of these resources and the nature of the information to be found in them, and thus to suggest to other researchers the kinds of questions they might ask of these materials.

1.1. Structure

This dissertation studies the way the newly invented electronic media of the early twentieth century, arriving from the outside, addressed the wild variety of music that confronted them in the DEI, and the way music responded.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 deal with the representation of the music of the DEI by the media—the *mapping* into commodity form of the salient features of the musical terrain. The chapters discuss gramophone recording and radio as media, looking at their operating methods and their output (records, broadcasts). Chapters 5 and 6 look at some of the genres that were most successful in the media and consider the changes they underwent, in musical style or social standing, during and after their media heyday.

Aside from this introduction, the chapters were initially articles, all written relatively close together (2009-12; published as Yampolsky 2010, 2011a, 2013a,b). They were not written to complement each other: instead they are chunks quarried from decades of research on gramophone and radio in the region I call IMS (defined in the Terminology note, p. xiv).

Chapters 2 and 3 were originally written for a technical publication on gramophone-era discography (Yampolsky 2011a in Gronow & Hofer 2011). My focus there was on the matrix numbers and “issue” or “catalogue” numbers that appear on the records, and only a hard-core discographer would have any reason to read them. I have rewritten them entirely here, omitting most of the discographical detail (still available in the original publication) and turning them into a narrative of the recording industry’s activities in IMS. Since from the industry’s point of view the three colonial regions formed in many respects a single market—united by lingua franca (Malay), dominant religion (Islam), some ethnic groups living in both regions,

some shared musical genres, and simple proximity (very important for marketing)—chapters 2 and 3 discuss recording in the entire IMS region. Chapters 4, 5, and 6, however, concentrate on the Dutch East Indies (DEI) and have little to say about the Malay/Straits (M/S) region. Less discographical than chapters 2 and 3 to begin with, the later chapters have required much less rewriting.

Chapter 2 deals with the recording industry in the period from the first recordings in 1903 to 1917, when the First World War disrupted trade and shipping between Asia and Europe and closed down the IMS industry almost entirely for the next eight years. (The DEI sector had already closed down some years before that.) Chapter 3 deals with the revival of the industry in the interwar years. Both chapters follow the same pattern, introducing the recording companies and what is known of their business practices, and culminating in charts that summarize quantitatively the production of IMS music in the two chronological periods.

The aim of the chapters is to show the recording industry as a business, and to quantify and categorize the records it produced. The quantitative information I offer is based on two sets of data: an estimate of total quantity—27,700 unique recordings—derived from the discographical data presented in the original publication of those chapters but mercifully omitted here; and my analytical listings of some 19,000 IMS recordings produced before early 1942, when Japanese armies invaded IMS and all record production stopped. Compiled from examination of discs in museums, archives, and private collections, from published record catalogues, and from advertisements in newspapers and magazines, the 19,000 listings account for 69% of the total number of recordings predicted by my estimates. (For DEI alone, without M/S, the proportion is somewhat better, especially for the interwar years: known records

account for 72.5% of the total estimate—66% of the estimate for the period before World War I and 75% for the period between the wars.) It has taken me over twenty-five years of ferreting in seven countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, the Netherlands, England, and the United States, plus information supplied by friends and colleagues in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Canada, and China) to put these listings together, and I doubt there is much more in the way of discs, catalogues, or advertisements to be discovered. In this dissertation, I analyze this corpus of “known records” and assume it to be approximately representative of the entire corpus, including the unknown records.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus to radio. I examined radio in order to see what genres and performers were prominent in the *other* electronic medium of the late colonial era. (The era of regular radio broadcasting in DEI began in 1934, though there was some hobbyist broadcasting from the late 1920s.) The collections of genres and their standing in the two media are largely the same, but because radio was a more localized medium—more dependent on the musicians living near the radio stations—examination of radio reveals more clearly the localized concentrations of performers and provides information about local performers who do not figure in gramophone records.

Radio also reveals more clearly than records the contrast between the “European” and the “Asian” audiences in the DEI. The contrast is clearer because no gramophone records were produced explicitly for the European audience; that audience was supplied with the records

made in Europe and the US for European and American audiences there)—whereas there was separate radio programming for European and native audiences.⁵

The only source for detailed information about radio programming before World War II is the program guides published (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) by the individual stations. Newspapers offered skeletal summaries of each day’s programming, but these gave little information about performers or the specific music broadcast. By far the largest collection of program guides is at the National Library in Jakarta, but even that collection has great gaps. The guides for some stations are not present at all, and months or whole years are missing in the runs for other stations. I chose to concentrate on 1938 not because that year was more important than any other in the radio era but because it was the year for which the National Library had complete runs for the greatest number of stations (five). The observations in Chapter 4 are based on an analytical tabulation of all live music broadcasts on those five stations for the entire year of 1938.

1.2. *Red threads*

Because the chapters here were not written together and focus on separate facets of the topic, the overall arguments, themes, and questions—what Indonesians call the *benang merah*, the red threads—are not explicitly set forth in them. These threads are: some general ideas about mediatization of music; the question of who were the consumers of musical media in the Dutch East Indies; an exploration (drawing on Bourdieu) of taste (“distinction”) and how DEI

⁵ Newspaper advertisements also reflect this separation: most of the papers that advertised new stocks of DEI records did not advertise the European classical- and popular-music discs that arrived in the same shipments; and vice versa: very rarely were DEI records advertised in papers aimed at European readers.

consumers used it to distinguish their own social group from others; and the question of what the recordings and broadcasts say about Indonesia—what country do they map?

Mediatization

Long before the media arrived, the Indonesian islands teemed with music; but the documentation of it begins with recordings. The earliest surviving Indonesian musical sounds are heard on non-commercial cylinder recordings of Sundanese and Javanese gamelan made by Benjamin Ives Gilman at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago on 28 September 1893.⁶ The first commercial recordings of DEI popular music were made ten years later, and the first commercial gamelan recordings in January 1906. But apart from allusions to music in literary works, impressionistic and usually unreliable descriptions in memoirs, and a handful of ethnographic reports of performance genres (e.g. Snouck Hurgronje 1906 [1893-94]), *writing* about Indonesia's music does not begin until the early 1920s, when the great Dutch scholars Jaap Kunst and J. S. Brandts Buys began their researches.

Kunst published first on Balinese music (1925a,b) and Javanese court music (1968 [1927], 1973 [1934]), while Brandts Buys concentrated on Javanese and Madurese folk music (1928, and many articles in *Djawa*, 1924-33). For two years, in 1930 and 1931, Kunst was the DEI's "Government Musicologist," a position he invented and persuaded the colonial administration to fund. This enabled him to travel far and wide in Indonesia, producing a wondrous series of major studies of music in New Guinea (1967 [1931 & 1950], Nias (1939), and Flores (1942), plus several smaller studies and surveys (collected in Kunst 1994). Unfortunately,

⁶ For the contents of the Gilman cylinders, see Lee 1984: 1, 7-17.

the musicologist position was eliminated in 1932 because of the Depression. In a new post as secretary to the Minister for Education and Religion, Kunst continued to travel and did more research when he could manage it, but in 1934 he returned to Holland, and he never visited the DEI or Indonesia again. Another encyclopedic scholar of the time was Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, whose enormous work *Javaanse volksvertoningen* (Javanese folk performances, 1938) covers the history and practice of countless folk dance, theater, and music genres (but without technical description of music or instruments).

These scholars focused solely on traditional music, as did Colin McPhee, whose *Music in Bali* (1966) is based on his research in the 1930s. They were certainly aware of recordings. Kunst made cylinder recordings during his travels in the 1930s, for archive deposit (they are inventoried in Kunst 1994), and he cites commercial 78s of gamelan music and *tembang Sunda* as examples in *Music in Java* (1973 [1934]); and McPhee was drawn to Bali in the first place by hearing the 1928 recordings made in Bali by Beka and Odeon. But 78s were unsuited to the normal length of a Balinese or Javanese gamelan composition, so they were of limited use for research purposes; and the recording companies made no effort to record in the remote regions that Kunst explored when he began to travel widely in 1930. How recordings might affect the music recorded was not an issue Kunst or McPhee considered; they saw gamelan recordings as tools for reference or demonstration, if a gamelan or a *kacapi* ensemble was not at hand.

As for the popular music abundantly available on 78s, it did not merit consideration. Kunst mentions *kroncong* twice in *Music in Java*, describing it as a “monotonous and characterless wail . . . that causes Indonesians to become more and more estranged from their

own art” (1973: 1:4) and as a music “still being played . . . with enthusiasm and unmistakable musicality, be it without the slightest real musical culture” (1973: 1:375). Pigeaud mentioned *kroncong* and *stambul* only in order to dismiss them as irrelevant to his topic because they were “not Javanese” (1938: 34).

When, at the opening of the twentieth century, the first of the electronic media, commercial recording, began to appear, it embraced certain of the myriad genres of Indonesian (DEI) music, creating in effect a map of what were, to the recording industry, the salient features of Indonesian music. Thirty years later another medium, radio, was introduced, partly dependent on commercial recording but also able to accommodate in its own mapping other genres that had not been recorded. And then, as time went on and the great changes of the twentieth century took place, the genres initially selected and promoted in media lost their mainstream appeal and were supplanted by others.

Where was the audience in all this, and where were the musicians? They had less power in the colonial period than they would have later on, when technologies of recording and dissemination became more widely available and affordable. In the early days, particularly before the advent of radio, it was the recording companies—and particularly their agents on the ground, since the directors of the companies were 7,000 miles away—who called the shots. These agents were mostly Peranakan Chinese⁷ retailers who had expanded their business to become wholesalers of records and gramophones. They set up recording sessions and chose artists and repertoire, sometimes under instructions from the head office but often on the basis of their own assessments of what consumers would buy. The agents were under contract to

⁷ For a definition of *Peranakan*, see the Terminology note, p. xiv.

buy predetermined quantities of the finished records themselves; if these did not sell, it was the agents' loss, not the companies'. Customers could only buy what the companies produced, and the system favored the tried and true. Experimentation was risky for the agents, and there was little or no mechanism for assertions of independence and resistance on the part of the artists. Later, when radio, operating on a somewhat different logic, was introduced, the audience had a greater say in what was offered to it.

Why, then, were certain genres attractive to the media and others not? What accounts for the longevity of some genres in the media and the more rapid decline and obsolescence of others? The answers lie in the nature of the demands media put on music, and, particularly, in the well-known affinity of media and popular music.

In *Popular musics of the non-Western world*, Peter Manuel offers first a summary description of popular music as “the new forms of music that have arisen in this century [the twentieth] in close relationship to the mass media,” and then an analytical description, borrowing some ideas (with modifications) from Bruno Nettl (1972): that popular music has an urban provenience and orientation, professional performers, and a stylistic relation to “the art music of its culture” (Manuel 1988: 1-3).⁸ Manuel adds that popular musics tend to be “secular entertainment musics.”⁹ Then he continues: popular music is typically characterized by “rapid

⁸ I question the criterion of relationship to the local art music. In Indonesia, most popular music is in some kind of foreign idiom, whether Euro-American (*pop Indonesia, kroncong, stambul*) or a mix of Western, Indian, and Middle Eastern (*dangdut*). These musics have little or no relation to the art music (i.e., gamelan music, *tembang Sunda*, etc.) of Java and Bali or to the traditional musics (which may or may not be termed art musics, depending on how that term is defined) of other regions of the country. But see footnote 11 for exceptions that support Nettl's criterion.

⁹ This also needs to be amended. There are many genres that behave just like obviously popular musics but have religious themes: Christian rock and “gospel blues” in the US; in Indonesia, *pop rohani, qasidah/nasyid*, and *dangdut* expressing Muslim precepts. These are essentially subgenres of larger popular music genres, differing

turnover of repertoire” and by the use of performer-centered marketing techniques (the “star system”). I propose to separate these last two traits out from the rest. The others pertain, I believe, to popular music in particular, while the last two are, potentially, features of all mediatized music, popular or not.

While genres may differ one from another, profit-oriented media¹⁰ tend to make the same demands of all genres. They want music that can accept the technical limitations and operating procedures of the media—the three-minute length of one side of a 10” 78-rpm disc, for example, when such discs were the standard physical medium; or (in the U.S.) a length permitting frequent radio advertisements; in the era of acoustic recording, sounds piercing enough to be picked up by an acoustic horn, or, in later years, loud enough to overcome road noise and be heard through a car audio system. They want music that is accessible to relatively large consumer markets.¹¹ Manuel’s “rapid turnover” is another general demand of the media,

from the parent genre only in lyric content. A more precise formulation would stipulate not that popular musics must only be secular, but that, if religious, they should not have liturgical or ritual functions and associations.

¹⁰ In the DEI (as everywhere), gramophone records were an unabashedly commercial, profit-oriented medium. In contrast, radio in the DEI was presented as a service to paying subscribers and was funded not through advertising (as in the U.S.) but through subscription fees. Anyone who owned a radio was obliged to pay an annual license fee covering a subscription to the government-sponsored network, known as NIROM after the private company (N.V. Nederlandsch-Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij) holding the government franchise to conduct broadcasting in the DEI; subscribers to other “private” radio stations had to pay additional subscription fees. NIROM’s operations and salaries were paid for out of the license fees, and the amount received was obviously a function of the number of subscribers. Thus it was in NIROM’s interest to please as many people as possible, in order to increase the number of subscribers. Complaints and pleas from subscribers were attended to, but often NIROM would respond in print (in its weekly or fortnightly program guides) that it could not honor every listener’s desire, because it had to juggle the claims of so many parties. This was market-driven programming, just as record production was market-driven.

¹¹ I would not extend the notion of accessibility as far as Philip Tagg does when he says that popular music is “conceived for mass distribution to large and often socioculturally heterogeneous groups of listeners” (1982: 41), as this seems to exclude the possibility of a popular music aimed at a single ethnolinguistic group. The “Chinese” varieties of *gambang kromong* discussed in chapter 6 are, in my view, precisely that, an ethnically targeted popular music, even though they are sung in Malay, the lingua franca. *Jaipongan*, a Sundanese genre popular in the 1970s and 1980s, is another, using Sundanese instruments and Sundanese musical idiom and sung in Sundanese, yet bearing all the other marks of a “national” popular music. *Jaipongan*, incidentally, *does* bear the “relation to the

but his qualification “of repertoire” is too narrow: consider the frequent re-recording of standards in American popular music (or, as we shall see, in *gambang kromong*). What is demanded is rapid turnover of *product*, so there is always something new to sell or broadcast.¹² The novelty may indeed lie in new repertoire, but it may alternatively lie in new artists (with new or old repertoire), or established artists revisiting their own earlier hits or someone else’s repertoire (*Satch Plays Fats*, *Roberta Flack Sings The Beatles*), or new styles or instrumentations, or, in the present time of rapid technological change, new recording or packaging formats.

As for performer-centered marketing, this is a demand of a mature music industry, because it facilitates promotion on two fronts at once: not only the music itself, its catchy tune or danceable rhythm or other appealing quality, but also the personality and biography of the performer. But satisfying this demand is contingent upon the existence of a sufficiently developed system of advertising and promotion. The genres I discuss in chapters 5 and 6 were taken up by gramophone recording *before* systems of newspaper advertising and radio promotion had fully developed in the DEI. (These systems did not appear there until well after World War I.) While I argue that *kroncong* remained an urban folk music until the 1920s, *stambul* and *gambang kromong* were, in my view, already popular musics before World War I; yet most of the recordings of these genres before the 1920s did not identify their singers or even, in many cases, the performing groups. The DEI case demonstrates that at least in the

art music of its [Sundanese] culture” that Nettl posited, and so does the Central- and East-Javanese popular genre *campursari* (Supanggih 2003). Cf. footnote 8.

¹² These are, as I said, the conditions of profit-oriented media. The conditions of ideologically governed media, such as those controlled by government or religious institutions, may be but are not necessarily different.

early stages of mediatization genres could achieve media success and qualify in all other respects as popular musics, without the benefit of performer-centered marketing.

Genres that could easily meet the basic operating criteria of the media were inevitably appealing to the record industry, and it is striking that in most parts of the world, in these early years of the industry, record companies could find or nurture genres that did meet them. Many of these genres were, of course, what anyone would call popular musics. A key reason why so many of the musics that flourished in the recording industry were *popular* musics is precisely that the traits typical of popular music are conducive to the production of music that meets the demands of media. Yet other genres that would not be considered popular—for example, in the DEI, Central and West Javanese gamelan music, *tembang Sunda*, Qur’anic recitation, and Islamic devotional singing—were also embraced by the media. These genres all adjusted to the three-minute format and the demand for rapid turnover, and several also tried to accommodate performer-centered marketing. Genres unable to make these adjustments—including most of the “traditional” musics outside Java and Bali—were typically ignored by the media.

Chapters 5 and 6 consider how certain DEI genres taken up by recording and radio responded to mediatization, and what happened to them when the media spotlight moved away and they became peripheral. Every genre—those I discuss in detail and others I skim over more quickly—has its specific character, its own complex of musical features and social content, and its adjustments and reconfigurations are unpredictable. That is what the study of genre trajectories is intended to reveal.

PENGIDOEPAN ROEMAH TANGGA, BISA DAPET ROEKOEN DAN MAOE SENANG ?



Lanteslah datang membeli
Satoe Gramofoon ! Soearanja Bagoes.

Merk :

„Beka.“ (Parlophon) „Limania.“ „His Master
Voice.“ „Deca.“ „Doza.“ Qualiteit - Soeara,
- Model jang menjenangkan !

Pendjoelan Contant,

Bisa djoega bajar menjitjil (Huurkoop)
Boeat dalam kotta Bandoeng sadja.

Selaloe sedia dan saban kali trima
lagoe-lagoe jang paling baroe, ternjanji
oleh orang jang soedah terpoedji soea-
ranja jang paling baik dan merdoeh,
dari Lagoe-lagoe : Soenda, Melajoe,
Djawa, Ambon, Tionghoa, Arab dan Europa,
dari lagoe dari Sprekende Film (Talkis).

Platen Gramofoon keloearan merk : Beka, Columbia, His Master's Voice, Odeon,
Ultraphoon, Badaiphon, Parlophon, Apex, dan Baby Polyphon, semoeanja merk jang
tersohor kabaikan Qualiteitnja.

Djaroem (Nalden) boeat Plaat Gramofoons, roepa-roepa Merk dari H.M.V.
tjap Andjing, Herlord, Burchard's, Ultraphoon, Orginel Lord, Phonograph,
tjap Kroon pake SSS, banjak matjem jang pake Krag, dan jang dari koening
dan dari Bamboe, sedia djoega jang satoe Nalde bisa pake 40 Plaat.
Matjem harga, dari per bleek à 200 St. f 0.15 sampe pada harga f 1.75 perbleek.

Sedia banjak oekoeran dari Veer Gramophon Qualiteit jang paling koeat
boekan keloearan dari fabriek Japan, harga menoeroet oekoeran besarnja.

Djoega sedia roepa-roepa Snaren keloearan Fabriek merk Herdim (Elite).

Djoega berdagang roepa-roepa barang Heeren, dames dan Kinder Artikelen.

Bisa trima membikin betoel segala keroesakan dari Gramofoons.

Harganja segala barang, dan segala ongkos reparatie, direkend jang
paling pantes bersaing, pendeknja menjenangkan pada pembeli.

Sebagi loemajan pada pembeli Plaat Gramofoon di persen Bon persenan,
lekaslah datang, di toengoe.

Daftar (Prijscourant) bisa dapat GRATIS bila di minta.

Menoenggoe dengan hormat

TOKO KAM & ZOON

Pasaa Baroe 8, Telefoon 2611

BANDOENG — (JAVA).

Figure 1.2. Targeting the consumer class. A retailer's advertisement from *Kiauw Po* [Bandung], 20 June 1931. The headline says: "Do you want a peaceful and happy home? Then come and buy a gramophone." Note the evening dress of the dancers and the expensive, furniture-model gramophone. Farther down, the text says: "We constantly receive the newest melodies [lagoe], sung by people whose voices are praised as the best and sweetest [merdoeh]. Sundanese, Malay, Javanese, Ambonese, Chinese, Arab, and European melodies."



Hoofdredacteur : J. VERBOOM.



Uitgeefster : **Naaml. Venn. „Het Weekblad voor Indië”.**
 Bureau : **Societeitstraat 9. Telefoon No. 72 Noord. Soerabaja.**



Abonnementsprijs: Voor Indië per kwartaal f 4,25;
 voor Nederland en het buitenland f 5, — bij vooruit-
 betaling. Afzonderlijke nummers à f 0,50.

Hoofdvertegenwoordiger in Nederland: ROUMA & Co.
 Heerengracht 226, Amsterdam.

Voor prijsopgaaf van advertentiën wende men zich
 tot de administratie.

Evolutie.



Ajo! Mina, — Njonja main poks-trot!

Drinkt Whisky Slot.

Figure 1.3. Cartoon in a Dutch-language weekly from 1920. The male servant says, in Malay, “Come on, Mina! Madam is playing a foxtrot!” The title of the cartoon is “Evolution,” suggesting that it is an evolutionary advance for the servants to rise to the level of the foxtrot.

The consumers

Before radio, the people who heard gramophone records were those who owned gramophones and bought records (and, no doubt, their servants and neighbors). When gramophone technology entered DEI, only the rich could afford it, but as time went on the prices came down, and there was also an increase in the number of Pribumi, Eurasians, and Peranakan-s who held jobs that paid a reliable (though usually not large) salary. In this way gramophones came within reach of what might be called the “lower elite”—or perhaps the “middle class,” though there is debate about whether a “middle class” even existed at that time. Howard W. Dick (1985: 76) proposed “consumer class”; but then he rejected the term for his article (in favor of “middle class”), because it failed to suggest the system of bourgeois values he wanted to discuss. For my purposes, though, consumption is precisely the key: consumption, as Dick stipulated, not of the essentials everyone must consume to live, but of optional, non-essential items like gramophones and radios.

At the top of colonial society, both economically and in terms of status, were the “pure blood” Europeans—men who worked as high officials in the Dutch administration and as company and plantation managers, and their wives and children. They barely figure in this discussion, as their cultural orientation was entirely to Europe.¹³ Undoubtedly many of these families had gramophones and bought records, but they were records not of local DEI music but rather of Western music recorded in Europe and America. And at the bottom of colonial society were the enormous mass of Pribumi farmers, laborers, fishermen, weavers, noodle

¹³ There were, of course, exceptions, like Kunst, Brandts Buys, Pigeaud, and scholars and “Indologists” affiliated with government museums and programs for the preservation of temples and other relics of “Hindu-Javanese” culture (see Sears 1996 and Fasseur 1993). But even those exceptions, it is safe to say, were buying only the most classical and courtly of DEI records, if any.

sellers. For the most part, they too were not buying DEI records, as few could afford gramophones. A 1926 report showed that 65% of Pribumi families in Java and Madura earned less than *f*150 (150 *gulden* or guilders) a year.¹⁴ The average price for a gramophone in 1925 and 1926 was around *f*95 (if we leave out of the average the ones advertised for *f*1250 and *f*2000, which must have been diamond-studded), and the rock-bottom cheapest gramophone sold for *f*15, more than the monthly income of those 65%. For another 20% of the Pribumi, whose income was around *f*300 per year (and whom Wertheim calls the “middle class”), the super-cheap gramophone would have amounted to 60% of one month’s income, and a middle-range machine (*f*95) would have cost close to a third of their *annual* income. The records were not cheap either: the normal price of a two-sided disc, three minutes to a side, was *f*2.50.¹⁵ Six discs would have taken another month’s income from the 65%—for 36 minutes of music. And radio, when it arrived in the mid-1920s, was still more expensive.¹⁶

Clearly, Wertheim’s “middle class” farmers, earning *f*300 a year, were not the likely market for records (or gramophones, but what we are really interested in here is records). George Kahin (1952: 29) proposes a different “middle class,” one that could plausibly include the consumers of luxury technologies: “those nonaristocratic members of Indonesian society whose economic position was well above average . . . [and] whose income was not directly

¹⁴ This figure and the one cited two sentences later come from Meijer Ranneft & Huender 1926, as interpreted in Rutgers 1947 and quoted in Wertheim 1959: 112. According to the website www.measuringworth.com, *f*1 (one guilder) was worth \$0.40 USD in 1926. Wertheim also extrapolates (1959:112), from another study, figures for the “outer provinces” (everything but Java and Madura) showing that 51.26% of the Pribumi there were “proletarians and poor peasants,” equivalent to the 65% in Java/Madura, and 31.89% were “middle class farmers,” equivalent to the 20% in Java/Madura who had income of *f*300 a year. The prices for gramophones and records given in this paragraph come from newspaper advertisement published in 1925 and 1926.

¹⁵ Prices of records before World War I were generally higher—in the *f*3 to *f*4 range.

¹⁶ Radios existed in the DEI from the mid-1920s, but they became popular with the wealthy from 1934, when regular broadcasting began. The lowest prices I have seen were around *f*75, and most radios cost in the neighborhood of *f*250. Moreover, one had to have electricity in order to run them, or else one had to use a wet-cell battery and either replace it periodically or take it to a source of electricity for recharging.

derived from agriculture.” He says that this middle class “for the most part . . . consisted of salaried employees, most of whom were civil servants.”¹⁷ Kahin’s definition seems to focus only on the Javanese, and mainly on the Javanese civil servants who administered (in Java) the system of “indirect rule” that disguised Dutch colonial control. This focus seems too narrow. The civil service included people from other ethnic groups as well as Javanese,¹⁸ and there were other kinds of work economically comparable to civil service: private enterprise, import/export, wholesaling and distribution of goods. Many Chinese and Eurasians found work in this non-government sector.¹⁹

Within this “middle class,” the Pribumi were clustered at the low end. Tables 1.1 and 1.2, adapted from Kahin (who takes them from Dutch reports of the 1930s), show this clearly. In Table 1.1 we see that 98.9% of the lowest-ranking civil service personnel in this survey were Pribumi, and only 6.4% of the highest-ranking; the inverse was true for the European employees (many of whom were Eurasians). It should also be noted how small the percentage

¹⁷ As an example, consider the nationalist leader Soekarno, who became Indonesia’s first president. An associate of his, Abu Hanifah, reports in his memoir that in 1921 Soekarno moved to Surabaya to take care of the family of another nationalist (Tjokroaminoto), who had gone to jail. Soekarno got a job as a clerk with the Government Railways and earned 165 guilders (ƒ165) a month. On this wage he supported himself and Tjokroaminoto’s family (eight persons in all) and still had ƒ40 a month left over for clothing and entertainment. Abu Hanifah also remarks that “even in 1932, you could live well on a salary of fifty guilders [per month]. Living of course, not like a European, but in accordance with the normal standards of living enjoyed by the Indonesian servants of the Dutch administration” (Hanifah 1972: 25,48).

¹⁸ According to Wertheim and The (1962: 241), “Eurasians and Menadonese or Ambonese Christians . . . had achieved during the nineteenth century a near-monopolistic position in the field of government administration.” The educational advantage enjoyed by these groups was reduced with the educational reforms around the beginning of the twentieth century, which opened up opportunities for schooling—and hence to better jobs—to greater numbers of Javanese.

¹⁹ Of Eurasians, Ulbe Bosma writes: “in [late colonial] society Indos held the middle ranking positions in private enterprise and government,” but “due to their limited financial means and—consequently—scant education, most Indo-Europeans could not attain high government posts” (Bosma 2005: 67). As for the Chinese, two professions in which they specialized were organizing the collection and transport of agricultural products and administering the myriad “tax farms” (*pachten*)—taxes levied on opium, dancing girls and theatrical performances (see chapter 6), and many other activities—that until the early twentieth century generated revenue from the *rakyat* for the government.

of Chinese in the civil service was. Table 1.2 shows the situation in non-governmental “Western” offices (that is, ones where the language of operation was Dutch), as reflected both in numbers of employees and in their salaries. There are as many Chinese as Pribumi employees (unlike the civil service), and 25% of the Chinese are in the higher wage bracket, compared to 15% of the Pribumi; but there are twice as many European/Eurasian employees as Chinese and Pribumi combined, and 56% of them are in the upper bracket.

Personnel category	Pribumi	Europeans (including Eurasians)	Chinese
Lower	98.9 %	0.6 %	0.3 %
Lower-middle	60.6 %	33.3 %	2.3 %
Middle	38.0 %	57.6 %	1.5 %
Upper	6.4 %	92.2 %	0.3 %

Table 1.1. *Civil service employees categorized by race and rank.*
(Source: Kahin 1952: 35, based on a 1938 report.)

Salary range	Pribumi	Europeans (including Eurasians)	Chinese & Other Asians
f 100 – f 200 per month	690	1,459	621
above f 200 per month	126	1,841	212
Total employees	816	3,300	833

Table 1.2. *Salaries of employees in Western firms.*
(Source: Kahin 1952: 30, based on a 1931 survey.)

These figures come from the 1930s, when, thanks to education reform and a steady, decades-long expansion of the civil service,²⁰ Kahin's middle class was at its greatest size. It would have been smaller in 1903, when the gramophone was introduced. And in any case we must bear in mind the size of DEI's overall population: in Java, nearly 41 million Pribumi, around 580,000 Chinese, and under 200,000 Europeans; in Indonesia as a whole, 59 million Pribumi, 1.2 million Chinese, and 240,000 Europeans.²¹ Kahin's middle class was tiny in comparison, and my "consumer class" was not much bigger. To recap, that consumer class consisted of Kahin's middle class (salaried office workers in the civil service and in "Western" businesses), plus the Javanese aristocracy and the upper layer of wealthy Europeans, Pribumi, and Chinese. However, the segment of the consumer class that would have bought specifically DEI records or listened to "Indies radio" was smaller, since virtually the entire group of non-Eurasian Europeans, as well as the wealthy Eurasians (and perhaps some of the wealthy Pribumi and Chinese) were oriented towards Europe and the West rather than the DEI and would have chosen records and broadcasting with European content.

Fissures in DEI society

As Furnivall observed in a well-known formulation, the DEI was a "plural society; a society, that is, comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet

²⁰ "[The civil service initially included] the *bupatis* [regional administrative officials, in Java typically appointed from the aristocracy], later the lower nobility, and eventually in this century [the twentieth] village headmen were finally included. Thus, gradually but inexorably, every traditional official was incorporated into the governmental system and transformed into a cog of colonial management" (van Doorn [1983]: 5).

²¹ These figures come from the 1930 census (Departement van Economische Zaken 1936, vol. 8, Table 1).

without mingling, in one political unit” (1939: 446).²² There were, of course, exceptions, especially towards the end of the colonial era: some Chinese, Pribumi, and Eurasian families managed to send their sons to Holland for university education and these graduates—those who had not become radicalized and turned into fervent nationalists—were presumably treated collegially by at least some of the Europeans; and as the nationalist movement gathered strength new organizations were created with board members from all groups (and even progressive full Europeans). And Furnivall’s description says only that the social groups did not *mingle*, not that they had no contact.²³ Contact was inevitable in cities, and also in rural areas, given the role of the civil service and the Chinese as intermediaries between the Dutch and the “ordinary people,” the *rakyat*. But social relations between groups were often fraught, and I shall maintain in the next section of this introduction that we can see these tensions enacted and mirrored in the media.

According to Abu Hanifah, a prominent nationalist, European prejudice was not directed at all Pribumi, but only at Javanese.²⁴ He himself was a Minangkabau, from Sumatra, and in his memoir he tells of being invited to a ball at the house of a Dutch family. He was born in 1906, so this must have taken place in the late 1920s or early ‘30s:

²² In Furnivall’s analysis (ibid.: 447-51), plural societies have no “common will” and “no social demand [for goods or services] common to the several elements.” The only ground on which the various sections of society meet is economic, and the production of material goods becomes “the prime end of social life.” Each section of society “comes to have its own functions in production, and . . . [in Java] the present distribution of economic functions coincides largely with racial differences.”

²³ Charles Coppel (2002[1997]) takes issue with Furnivall, proposing that Java at the dawn of the twentieth century was a “*mestizo*” rather than a plural society, with more mingling of the races than Furnivall allows. But Coppel concedes that “racial boundaries sharpened” in the years between 1900 and the end of the colonial era (ibid.: 149).

²⁴ Abu Hanifah seems to use this term as the Dutch often did, to apply to all the inhabitants of the island of Java (and possibly also Madura), eliding the ethnic and linguistic distinctions among Javanese, Sundanese, Cirebonese, Osingers, Madurese, etc.

I was invited because one of the daughters of the house was my girl friend. I asked the hostess if I could invite a friend. . . . She actually liked me very much and I believe that as a prospective doctor of medicine, she had no objections to me being a prospective son-in-law as well. It happened many times during that period that young upper-class Indonesians married Dutch girls. . . . After everybody had gone, including my friend, the hostess told me in a friendly enough way that it would be better next time if I did not invite my friend The trouble was that he was an *inlander*. His name, they discovered, began with a SU and ended with an O [a common structure for names all across Java, viz. Sukarno, Susilo, Sunaryo, etc.]. . . . “My dearest Abu,” the hostess told me very nicely, “you should also regard our society. They will not understand; and despite your argument that you and your friends are equal and must be treated as such, we disagree in this with you. On the other hand you are different and always have been accepted in our circles.” (1972: 39-40)

I find this story quite surprising, especially the part about a Dutch mother’s welcoming a Pribumi’s attentions to her daughter,²⁵ but the scorn of the Dutch for the “Javanese”—who were, after all, the most numerous Pribumi and the ones the Dutch dealt with every day as housemaids, cooks, drivers, and underlings—is all too believable.

The “pure” Dutch also had anxiety specifically concerning Pribumi women, who, according to Dutch discourse, had an unbridled sensuality and “debased character” that could contaminate the Dutch children in the houses where they worked.²⁶ This dissolute nature had seduced many European men—witness all the Eurasian children. These children, too, particularly the girls, were “victims of their ‘mongrel origins,” and in the communities of poor Eurasians (“paupers”) they “degenerated in a physical and moral sense” (Gouda 1995: 112-117).

²⁵ Abu Hanifah was—in addition to being a medical doctor, journal editor, painter, ambassador, and cabinet minister—a novelist (he wrote under the pseudonym El Hakim), and perhaps there is some novelistic embellishment in his anecdote. In the DEI, wives took the civil status of their husbands, and a Dutch woman lost her European legal standing (and that of her future children) if she married a Pribumi (Gouda 1995: 168; Stoler 1992: 539-45). It did happen, but from a European point of view the results were dire.

²⁶ “Childcare manuals of the turn of the century warned of the ‘extremely pernicious’ moral influence of *babus* [Pribumi nursemaids] and advised that ‘the children should under no circumstances be brought to bed by [them] and never allowed to sleep with [them] in the same room” (Stoler 1996: 79).

A different way of dealing with another social group—depending less on revulsion and contempt than on isolation or simple erasure—is seen in some of the popular “Chinese-Malay” novels written in Malay by Peranakan Chinese authors before World War II. These have all sorts of settings, from ancient China and ancient Rome to sophisticated Europe and Shanghai, gangland America, and even to exotic locales in the DEI (Papua, Timor, Bali). But a large proportion are set among wealthy Peranakan Chinese in Javanese cities, and many of these feature *only* Chinese. If any Europeans or Pribumi appear, they are interlopers, agents of disorder, threatening to lead the Chinese daughter astray. (They sometimes succeed, but things usually end badly. The girl should have stayed home.) The novels are mainly about the interactions of Chinese with each other, and there is little positive interaction of Chinese with Europeans, or Chinese with Pribumi.

This, then, is one set of fault lines in DEI society, at the junctures and disjunctures of race. Within racial communities, as well, there were fractions and fractures, economic and cultural. Among the Javanese, for example, there were the comparatively small sectors of the aristocracy and the civil servants, and then the enormous mass of peasants, the latter outnumbering the former by roughly a thousand to one. Some Chinese were still coolies, and many were small traders in remote areas, better off than the Pribumi who bought supplies from them, but still by no means wealthy. There was an influential group of recent immigrants from China, known as the *Totok* (“full-blooded,” as contrasted with the Peranakan, “mixed-blood”). The Totok criticized the Peranakan for having lost Chinese language and Chinese customs, making many Peranakan defensive about their hybridized practices. And concerning the Eurasians, Robert van Niel writes:

The general social and economic position of the Eurasian part of the European community was far from good in 1900. True, some whose fathers had taken an interest in them and provided them with some education had obtained clerical and technical posts with government bureaus and department or had become artisans and craftsmen in the urban centers. Those so fortunate might be said to make up the middle levels of the European community. But many others, probably the majority in 1900, had been ignored by their European fathers, had been unable to adjust to their inter-cultural position, and had found the government unwilling to do anything for them as a group. These Europeans had drifted onto the peripheries of Indonesian life where their constant identification with European status, despite their degraded position, prohibited an adjustment. These people became the flotsam of East Indian society. (1955: 13)

Van Niel is writing of those Eurasians classified as Europeans—ones who had at least been recognized by their fathers, though they may have been ignored after that.²⁷ This group of classificatory Europeans runs the gamut from government posts to flotsam. Some—the ones who have written memoirs of their happy youth in the Indies (Ido 1935; Schenkhuizen 1993; Weski 1984; and many others)—lived largely as Europeans and were culturally oriented to Europe. Others lived in near-poverty, and this state of affairs from time to time occasioned a furor about European pauperism. (For people classified as Europeans to be visibly indigent was a racial embarrassment. Pribumi poverty was apparently less of a public concern.) Bosma and Raben (2008: 310) suggest that the problem of pauperism was exaggerated, but the Indos themselves perceived it as a problem: Hans van de Wall (“Victor Ido”), a comfortably privileged Indo, wrote a novel (1912) about poor Indos in Batavia, which he titled *De Paupers*.

²⁷ Paul van der Veur observes that Eurasians who qualified as Europeans were “legally, culturally and socially . . . set apart from their brethren of mixed descent ‘on the other side of the fence’. The one stream of mixed descent constantly fought hard to be accepted as Dutch citizens in practice; the other stream diffused almost instantly into the indigenous population, quickly becoming an integrated part of it” (1955: 22). Both propositions in the last sentence are, I think, overstated. There was surely duality, ambivalence, and divided loyalty on both sides of the line.

Finally, Furnivall's model of "two or more" societies side by side, while technically accurate, seems inadequate to the case. Apparently he saw all the Pribumi as one group (or perhaps all Pribumi as Javanese).²⁸ But in fact ethnic insularity, especially in rural homelands, was the rule—so the DEI was a plural society with perhaps *one thousand* societies side by side.²⁹ Most of these had no governing bodies or tribal councils with authority higher than the village; the only extra-local authorities were the colonial government (and its local representatives) and, to some extent, religious councils. Anderson points out that the colonial school system "brought students together from islands distant from each other" and gave them a "self-contained, coherent universe of experience creat[ing] a bond over and above ethnic and regional loyalties" (1991: 120-122). In so doing, the schools helped to forge in these student cohorts a sense of brotherhood and common cause. It is undoubtedly true that the schools were one of the seedbeds of Indonesian nationalism consciousness. But the number of Pribumi who had the opportunity for secondary or tertiary Western-style education was minuscule (about 6,500 in 1928 [Kahin 1952: 31]) compared to the tens of millions still living in discrete, parallel, ethnically homogeneous communities. These ethnic communities were all, to an extent, dominated by the Dutch colonial administration, but below that superimposed stratum of domination they maintained their own hierarchical structures, ranging from highly to minimally stratified.

²⁸ One can charge Kahin and van Niel with the same mistake, but it is easy to see how so many scholars came to make it. According to the 1930 census, 69% of all Pribumi in the DEI lived on Java and Madura (administratively part of Java), so in that sense they were all "Javanese"; moreover, 47% of all DEI Pribumi were ethnic Javanese, another 15% were their western neighbors the Sundanese, and another 7% were Madurese. These three ethnic groups were easily but inaccurately lumped together as "Javanese."

²⁹ In the 2000 census, the Indonesian government's Biro Pusat Statistik (Central Bureau of Statistics) assigned codes to 1,072 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups (Suryadinata, Arifin & Ananta 2003: 10).

Strategies of distinction

The gramophone era in IMS falls into two main phases. The first began tentatively, with an exploratory recording tour in 1903 by the Gramophone Company, and another in 1906, this time by the German firm Beka. The European and American companies did not really commit themselves to recording and publishing for IMS until 1907, after the recordings from the first Beka tour proved successful. (The Gramophone Company remained dubious, not returning to the area until 1909.) This first phase ran up to mid-1917, in the midst of World War I, when the Gramophone Company made its last recordings in Singapore before a gap of several years.

The second phase for M/S began desultorily: the Gramophone Company recorded Chinese music in Singapore in January 1920, but then it let two years go by before returning in February 1922, again to record Chinese music only; and after that no company recorded in M/S (or anywhere in IMS) until April 1925. In DEI the two phases are more starkly separated: the last DEI records were issued in July 1914 and therefore could not have been recorded later than the beginning of 1914 (and may have been recorded earlier); and after that there were no more recordings in DEI until mid-1925.

Thus, for DEI, the first period of sustained recording was at most only about seven years long (from 1907 to the beginning of 1914 at the latest). It was essentially static: in the categories that I am concerned with in this dissertation, there is little change throughout the period. No important stylistic changes are evident in the various genres that are recorded. In the second phase, however, running from 1925 to 1941, there are stylistic changes over the course of those years, and there are also marked contrasts between the first and second phases, indicative of changes that took place during the twelve-year hiatus in DEI recording.

In my view, these changes—from the first phase to the second, and in the course of the second phase—have a great deal to do with the issues of inter- and intra-class standing and tension that I outlined in the previous section. Gramophones, recordings, and, later, radio were all used strategically, to assert class standing and to distance one class or class fraction from another, and musical practice, at least as it can be gauged from recordings, changed to suit the strategies of the consumers.

We are now in the realm of taste, so thoroughly mapped and analyzed for French society of the 1960s in Bourdieu's monumental *Distinction* (1984 [French original 1979]). It is not possible, for the DEI, to match the details of taste and consumption to the specifics of class fractions' occupations and educational levels, as Bourdieu did, because no one conducted in the 1920s or '30s the kind of questionnaire that undergirds Bourdieu's study; but also, I believe, the enormous range of commodified cultural goods available in 1960s France was not present in the DEI in the late-colonial era. Thus there were fewer of what Bourdieu calls "stylistic possibles": products, styles, and artists, through which or through whom to implement "strategies of distinction" (which he glosses, quoting Proust, as "the infinitely varied art of marking distances") (1984: 66).

I also question whether the central notion of cultural capital applies in the DEI, or applies as pervasively as it does in Bourdieu's France. In his analysis, cultural capital is concerned almost exclusively with "consecrated" or "legitimate culture," or what I would call (with some trepidation) "high art." People who through familial habituation and educational training have developed the cultural competence (have "learned the code") needed to understand and be comfortable with works of high culture can use that knowledge as capital

for the acquiring of power and other kinds of capital (economic capital in the form of money and possessions, or symbolic capital in the form of recognition, prestige, “distinction . . . and legitimacy” [1984: 228]). Others have more distant and hence less profitable relations to high culture. Cultural competence serves to mark and identify the members of the dominant class, and thus it certifies them as eligible for the opportunities and privileges afforded that class; in this way it participates in the process of domination.³⁰ Bourdieu says, succinctly, “Differences in cultural capital mark the differences between the classes” (ibid.: 69).

The problem in applying the idea of cultural capital to the DEI is that there was no evident consensus on what constituted “legitimate culture.”³¹ For the Dutch it was European high culture (particularly literature), and competence in this cultural code would have been imparted to the lucky Eurasians, Pribumi, and Chinese who managed to enter Dutch-language schools and who would, by virtue of that education, go on to jobs in government and business. To that extent the idea applies.³² But for other Chinese, those who did not know Dutch, high

³⁰ Johnson 1993: 24. If one wants to ask, with Hans Abbing (2002), then “why are artists poor?”, Bourdieu has an answer: *within* the dominant class, the amount of cultural capital varies inversely with the amount of economic capital. Artists may be poor, but they’re not as poor as the working class: they are able to exercise the “tastes of luxury rather than the tastes of necessity,” are able to keep “the working class and its primary needs . . . at a distance” (1984: 183). Artists, teachers, and Intellectuals choose—out of disposition or on the basis of a rational assessment of their capacities and opportunities—to pursue the accumulation of cultural capital rather than economic capital. They belong to the dominant class, but to the “dominated fraction” of it.

³¹ A related problem is that Bourdieu’s schema does not accommodate the differences in taste that may be associated with different ethnic groups. “It is well known that Bourdieu was unable to gather survey data exploring the relations between ethnicity and cultural practices owing to the prohibition, under French law, of including questions on ethnic identification in census or other questionnaires. While this accounts for why his statistical data is silent on these matters, it does not explain why *Distinction* is more or less entirely an ethnic-free zone The reader of Bourdieu’s chapter on the working-class choice of the necessary encounters not a sign of anything other than a purely French and monochromatically white working class” (Bennett & Silva 2011: 433-34). See also Trienekens 2002.

³² Note that there was no Dutch effort to communicate that knowledge to Pribumi outside the Dutch-language schools. The government publishing house, Balai Poestaka, did not, for instance, have a program to translate European classics into Malay. The library of the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) in Leiden, which has copies of most official publications from the DEI (and much else besides), has Malay-language Balai Poestaka novelizations of two Shakespeare plays (*The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew*), a

culture was Chinese. It came from China and was in Chinese—for the Peranakan, unattainably distant, both geographically and culturally.³³ Alternatively, for some Chinese, high culture was the culture of the Central Javanese courts,³⁴ as it was for ethnic Javanese. This could serve as the basis of cultural capital for Javanese (and Javanized Chinese), but it would have no currency with other ethnic groups, or with members of the consumer class for whom an ethnic identity was not paramount. It is as Furnivall said: there was no common culture, and no common demand for consumption. I maintain that gramophones, radios, and recordings did indeed become weapons in a strategy of distinction, a means of asserting social standing, but that they did not partake of high culture, and thus their effectiveness as symbols of distinction did not depend on cultural capital. To fit the whole of Bourdieu’s analysis into the DEI, one must either open up cultural capital to domains other than high culture,³⁵ or base strategies of distinction on something other than cultural capital.

verse translation of *Hamlet* into Sundanese, and a translation into Malay of *Don Quixote*. These were published in the 1930s. A book of Tolstoy’s parables (*peroempamaan*) and another of his stories, from the 1920s. That seems to be all; no Goethe, Racine, Balzac, Dickens, Flaubert, Victor Hugo. The *plots* of classic European stories (Shakespeare in particular) were known through *stambul* plays, and there were Malay translations of popular novels (Dumas, Verne, Conan Doyle) and also some classics (*Anna Karenina*, *Tale of Two Cities*), but these were all published in the cheap editions of the Chinese-Malay popular book trade and were not presented as “consecrated” high culture. (For the titles of works of Western literature translated into Malay by Peranakan authors, see Salmon 1981: 525-41.)

³³ Here again, there were Malay translations published in the Chinese-Malay book trade, but again they were popular in format and style and had none of the formality that would allow them to generate cultural capital for the Peranakan.

³⁴ Liem Thian Joe reports ([1933]: 144) that in the 1870s Chinese in Semarang were studying Javanese literature in increasing numbers, and many books transposed stories from Chinese into the meters of Javanese sung poetry (*tembang*) and were printed in Javanese script. Note that this is before the period of “racial hardening” mentioned in footnote 23, but even in that later period there were Peranakan Chinese in Central Java who were enamored of Javanese art and sponsored performances and also learned to perform it themselves.

³⁵ Some theorists are attempting to do this, proposing that in the U.S. (for example), there are more “omnivores,” acquiring cultural capital through familiarity with films, television, and popular music as well as (some) high art, than there are the “univores” of Bourdieu’s model. See, for example, the special issue of *Poetics* on cultural capital (Bennett & Silva 2011). The editors show, however, in their introduction (ibid.: 433) that the “omnivore thesis” undercuts Bourdieu’s “theoretical armature”; to accept it uncritically one would have to give up much of the rest of *Distinction*.

I propose that in the first phase of the gramophone era the cultural good that was appropriated by the consumer class was the technology itself. Gradations in status could be marked by the magnificence of one's gramophone, and perhaps by the number of records one owned, but none of the kinds of music recorded for the DEI market had a generally acknowledged higher status than any other. Javanese presumably considered recordings of Javanese gamelan to have higher status and cultural value than Malay-language recordings of popular songs from the *stambul* theater, but this would have had currency only within the Javanese ethnic group. Similarly, for the Chinese, *gambang kromong* (chapter 6) was presumably of higher status than *stambul* songs, since it was overtly Chinese (or Peranakan), but this would hardly cut any ice with the Eurasians who liked *stambul*. Even within one social group, it is not clear that the status of genres mattered very much when it came to recordings. For example, *kroncong* songs, which in that early phase were an element in the music of the *stambul* theater, were associated with the poorer and rougher strata of Eurasian society, yet the consumer class did not reject them as unacceptably low-class. Similarly, much of the Javanese gamelan music recorded in the first phase was performed by musicians from Semarang, rather than the exemplary centers of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, and consisted of music associated with the rowdy and raunchy *tayuban* dance parties, rather than the music of the stately court gamelan; moreover, 26% of the gamelan recordings were not from Central Java at all but from East Java, distinctly lower in status. Why would the well-to-do Javanese who could afford to buy records accept these somewhat less-than-top-drawer goods? I suggest that the sheer novelty of there being anything at all on record and the relatively limited selection of products to choose from largely exempted the records from criticism, encouraging

consumers to overlook whatever shades of disreputability or artistic inferiority a critical eye might perceive.³⁶ Simple possession of a gramophone demonstrated its owner's wealth and embrace of modernity, and it brought so much symbolic capital—prestige, distinction, distance—that the nature of the music played on it was beside the point.

What we see in the second phase of the gramophone era, after the twelve-year hiatus that began in 1914, is that the free pass formerly given to the socially dubious has been withdrawn. We see this most clearly in the case of *kroncong* (chapter 5), where musical changes have made the genre (as represented on records) more refined and respectable, something that does not embarrass the consumer class. A similar development occurs in Central Javanese gamelan music: the recordings are now mostly made in the court cities, and often feature the court musicians; the compositions now come from the dignified court repertoire, not from *tayuban*; and the representation of East Javanese gamelan has shrunk from 26% to under 5%. We see further a sharp decrease in the recordings of *gambang kromong*, the principal Chinese genre of the era before World War I. I argue in chapter 6 that this happens because the genre has become associated with a lower-class theater form and from the point of view of the Chinese in the consumer class is now unacceptably *déclassé*.

Bourdieu writes of

intentional strategies through which members of a group seek to distinguish themselves from the group immediately below (or believed to be so), which they use as a foil, and to identify themselves with the group immediately above (or believed to be so), which they thus recognize as the possessor of the legitimate life-style. (1984: 246)

³⁶ In the case of the East Javanese gamelan recordings, it may be that they were marketed only in East Java, so the question of whether Central Javanese consumers ignored the "rough" qualities of East Javanese gamelan for the sake of novelty would not have arisen. I have seen no advertisements for the East Java records in Central or West Javanese newspapers.

This is what has happened with *kroncong*: as I show in chapter 5, the *kroncong* recorded after 1925 is too complex and elaborate for the genre's former, socially inferior constituency; in fact *kroncong* in the second phase has lost its strong association with the Eurasians of Batavia and has become the property of the consumer class across the DEI; it is no longer the preserve of a single ethnicity. (Bourdieu does not mention this strategy, since he does not deal with ethnicity.) Bourdieu's formulation also works for Central Javanese gamelan: the Javanese civil servants and non-aristocratic consumers can identify themselves with the aristocracy whose music they hear on the records. It applies also to the Chinese withdrawal from *gambang kromong*, which has sunk to the level of "the group immediately below."

We also see in this second phase a process of distinction *within the consumer class*. Just as the class itself seeks to distinguish itself from the group below it, the upper tier of the consumer class—the Javanese aristocracy, and the wealthiest Eurasians—now seek a way to distinguish themselves from the lower tier. The Eurasians turn to the genre of popular music called *Hawaiian*, which is almost the same in instrumentation as *kroncong* but is sung *in English* (or in Hawaiian) and is therefore less accessible to less cosmopolitan consumers. (In chapter 4 we will see radio broadcasts by Koesbini's group that mix songs in European languages and Malay; these look like an attempt to appeal to both fractions of the consumer class.)

For the upper tier of Javanese consumers we see not a new, exclusive repertoire but new and more expensive products: 12" records (instead of the normal 10"), recorded by court musicians, sporting impressive label designs; and multi-record sets of *langendriyan* recordings (the signature genre of the Mangkunegaran court in Surakarta), sold as six-disc albums. The Javanese aristocracy may not have felt it so urgent to distinguish themselves from ordinary

consumers in genre or repertoire, because by purchasing the records those consumers were already paying feudal homage to their betters, acknowledging the superiority and desirability of court arts. Moreover, the aristocrats actually owned the gamelans and employed the musicians; the lower consumers had no access to the live performances that entertained the aristocracy and could not themselves act as dancers in these performances, as the princes could.

For the Chinese the situation is different: there was a vacuum where *gambang kromong* had been, and there was not much else in Peranakan Chinese music that was available to fill it. Music for the *yang kim* (= *yang qin*, the Chinese struck zither, which could play solo or in an ensemble with other Chinese strings and flutes) was a possibility, but there is not a marked increase in *yang kim* recordings in the second phase. (*Yang kim* does figure significantly in radio broadcasts.) Some of the Peranakan Chinese consumer audience may have shifted to *kroncong* and other popular music not tied to a specific ethnic group; some, made ashamed by *totok* Chinese of their loss of “true” Chinese culture (chapter 6), may have shifted instead to recordings of music from Singapore, Hong Kong, and the mainland.

There is a different development in the *tembang* genre of the Sundanese people of West Java (now known by the umbrella term *tembang Sunda*). In its original form, *tembang Sunda* is music for a male singer and a single plucked zither, *kacapi*, and its repertoire consists of unmetered singing of poetic verses to a relatively small repertoire of melodies, with ostinato or melodically limited accompaniment. The genre developed in the mid-nineteenth century among the Sundanese aristocratic and administrative elite. Song texts concerned the history and legends of the old pre-Islamic Sundanese kingdoms. By the end of the nineteenth century,

tembang performances consisted of suites of a few such songs, each suite closed by a short instrumental postlude played by *kacapi* and a *suling* (flute) or *rebab* (bowed lute).

Beginning sometime around the start of the twentieth century, a new and more accessible song form, called *rarancagan*, developed within the *tembang* genre. Like the earlier repertoires, it was in free meter, but it could be sung by either men or women, and its texts ranged through the more modern and personal topics of love sorrow, and nostalgia. The musical accompaniment was more elaborate than for the older style.

Then—when is not clear, perhaps not until the 1920s—a second form developed that was more accessible still. Called *panambih* (meaning “additional songs” and often labeled “extra” on records, using the English word) this is the only form of *tembang* that is sung in fixed meter, and it is sung only by women. A second *kacapi* (*kacapi rincik*) is added for *panambih*, creating an attractively contrapuntal two-*kacapi* accompaniment, with steady picking patterns in the upper register and syncopated rhythms imitative of drumming in the lower. Although *panambih*, like *rarancagan*, tend to be sad or romantic or nostalgic, musically they are easier to perform and thus lighter and less charged than free-meter *tembang*.

In the first phase of the recording era, the *tembang* recordings that I know of are all of the free-meter styles, and in terms of recording quantities the genre itself seems firmly in second place behind Sundanese gamelan music. In the second phase, however, recordings of various forms of *tembang* and associated instrumental pieces greatly outnumber recordings of gamelan music (903 to 236), and of the free-meter repertoire there is hardly anything but the newest type, *rarancagan*. These free-meter recordings, however, are themselves outnumbered by recordings of *panambih*. Thus, compounding the move away from the earliest, classical

repertoire that is represented by the emergence of *rarancagan*, there are further shifts in the *tembang* genre, possibly beginning in the recording hiatus but taking place increasingly over time in the 1920s and '30s, from free meter to fixed meter, and from male singers to female singers.

How to read this, in the Bourdieusian frame introduced earlier? I see it as the lower fractions (the majority) of the consumer class appropriating the aristocratic *tembang* genre and reshaping it to make it *less elite and more accessible*—and, given the female singers, more sexually charged. However, the formulation that I quoted earlier from Bourdieu—about members of a group seeking to distinguish themselves from the group below and seeking to identify themselves with the group above—works only partially in this reading. By appropriating an elite genre, the consumers were indeed distinguishing themselves from the mass of Sundanese farmers. But if the consumers wanted to identify with the elite, as we would expect from Bourdieu, they should have preferred the free-meter, male-voice *tembang*.

Bourdieu offers another observation that is more apt in this situation: “tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes . . . [for] the tastes of others” (1984:56). Similarly, the anthropologist Mark Liechty, writing on the emergence of middle-class culture in Nepal after 1950, identifies a “middle-class project to construct itself in opposition to its class others, *above and below*” (Liechty 2003: 15; emphasis added). The lower fractions of the consumer class (whom, by this point, we may as well call the middle class, since they define themselves in contrast to the elite) wanted the elite genre, but they did not want it to be *too elite*. They left the less accessible part of the repertoire to the elite, and took the part that had women singers and a beat to it. They also made a recording star of a singer named Menir Moeda, whose

specialty was *tembang* with comic verses or comic banter inserted between verses.³⁷ The effect was to deflate the more elite pretensions of the genre, to take it down a peg.

With Liechty's formulation, we can also reconsider the change that occurred in Central Javanese gamelan recordings and notice that there too the so-called "lesser *priyayi*" (the office-workers and lower officials, but not the higher administrators and the aristocrats)³⁸ managed to distinguish themselves from the groups both above and below them: they left the *tayuban* repertoire behind, but they also emphasized the shorter, less majestic pieces in the classical repertoire and the ones with singing, the *ladrang*-s and *ketawang*-s and *palaran* (and *dolanan*, children's songs arranged for gamelan), rather than the *gendhing ageng*.

There is an unexplained convergence here. How did the record companies know what the record-buying public wanted? How did they manage to suit their production to the "strategies of distinction" of the consumers? I am not proposing that the audience sent a petition to the record companies to say, Give us the lighter gamelan pieces, give us the catchy, metered tunes with the female singers, make *kroncong* more respectable. It may be that the

³⁷ "Menir Moeda" was his professional name, taken from the Dutch *mijnheer* and meaning "Young Gentleman." His personal name was Holil. Another performer of comic *tembang* was Epen Soetardi, said to have put more emphasis on a beautiful sound (Sayudi 1984).

³⁸ I have avoided this ambiguous word *priyayi* so far. Robert van Niel equates the term with his "elite": "the administrators, civil servants, and better educated and better situated Indonesians in both town and countryside are known as the elite or *priyayi*," but he notes that the Javanese nobility are also called *priyayi* (1960: 15-16). George Kahin, in a passage I quoted earlier, defines his "middle class" as "nonaristocratic" Pribumi with better-than-average economic situations, and says that it consists mainly of civil servants. So leaving aside the Javanese nobility, Kahin's middle class and van Niel's elite are the same, and they can both be termed *priyayi*. The real problem with the word is not its ambiguity regarding the nobility, but that it inevitably suggests the ethnic Javanese—or, if one allows the Sundanese *menak* to be a "local version of the *priyayi*" (Sutherland 1975: 63), then it can suggest the Sundanese as well. But as I pointed out in footnote 18, the colonial administrators—and the rest of van Niel's elite or Kahin's middle class—were not only Javanese and Sundanese. Nevertheless, in the present context of consumers of Central Javanese gamelan recordings, the term "lesser *priyayi*," which clearly does not include the nobility, seems allowable.

trends in audience taste were evident in their reactions to live performances, and the record companies (or rather, their middlemen on the ground) picked up on them. Or it may be that the record companies, then as now, recorded all sorts of things and waited to see which ones the public went for.

Bourdieu has a more theoretical answer to account for “the quasi-miraculous correspondence” between what producers offer and what consumers’ tastes demand:

The producers are led by the logic of competition with other producers and by the specific interests linked to their position in the field of production . . . to produce distinct products which meet the different cultural interests which the consumers owe to their class conditions and position.” (1984: 230-31)

One aspect of the convergence is, I think, an instance of function following form. The three-minute format of 10” discs was much better suited to short musical forms than to long ones. A grand Javanese *gendhing* needs some twenty minutes for a classically balanced performance of *merong* and *inggah* (first movement and second), each played a respectful number of times, and if it is combined with other, progressively shorter pieces in a suite (as it typically is in live situations) the whole performance can take forty-five minutes or more. A classical *tembang Sunda* suite, with verses sung to several melodies, capped with a *panambih*, can also take fifteen or twenty minutes. While it would be possible to put these long forms on record, it would require multi-disc sets, which would naturally be more expensive than single discs. On the other hand, *ladrang*-s and *ketawang*-s could be squeezed into the three-minute format, and *panambih* were perfectly tailored to it.

The Idea of Indonesia

Benedict Anderson argues (1991, chapter 3) that “print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness.” Following the invention of movable-type printing in Europe, printers first published in the “sacred language,” Latin, but after the “wide but thin” market of Latin-readers was saturated, they aimed at “monoglot” readers, the speakers of the various European languages who were not able to read Latin. This led both to the introduction of literacy to many language communities, and to standardization of grammar and spelling in those languages.³⁹ But Anderson points out that it was not *printing*, per se, that “created monoglot mass reading publics,” it was capitalism—or, more precisely, the convergence of the two, collaborating to meet a demand posed by “the fatal diversity of human language.”⁴⁰ Printers developed print-languages in order to find markets; capitalism disseminated the books in these languages; the print-languages set the foundation for national consciousness.

What if we substitute *recording and broadcasting* for printing in this formula? What are the equivalencies in the musical field? Obviously the record companies and radio stations are the printers, and capitalism is capitalism. But did the music on the records and in the broadcasts help to create a national consciousness, or (its logical predecessor in Anderson’s schema) a new sense of simultaneity and shared experience linking people in the imagined community of the colony?

³⁹ Anderson’s presentation of the points about literacy and standardization is so compressed that it is hard to understand. It is more clearly presented in the source he directs readers to in a footnote (1991: 44 n.20), namely Steinberg’s *Five hundred years of printing*: “Having fortified the ‘language walls’ between one nation and another [by publishing in the various vernaculars rather than in Latin], the printers proceeded to break down the minor differences of speech—most noticeably of vocabulary, grammatical forms, and syntax—within any given language group. . . . It was Caxton who overcame the perplexing confusion of Middle-English, and, by adopting that of the Home Counties and London, fixed a standard never to be abandoned. . . .” (1966: 123).

⁴⁰ Printing, he notes, existed in China for some 500 years before Gutenberg, but it had little impact, because capitalism was not there to find markets for it (1991: 44 n.21, 45).

The only candidate for the role is the Malay-language popular music—*kroncong*, *stambul*, and “unclassified.” The other genres on records were too narrowly targeted—at Javanese, Sundanese, Cirebonese, Chinese, Muslims, Melayu, Balinese, and, later, in the 1930s, “Batak” and Minang.⁴¹ Popular music in the first phase of recording was mainly limited to Batavia, and to an audience comprising only the more cosmopolitan Eurasians, Chinese, and Pribumi, but in the second phase the scope of popular music broadened, as Eurasian performers were joined by Chinese and Pribumi. (Of the two biggest *kroncong* stars in the second phase, one, Miss Riboet, was Pribumi; the other, S. Abdullah, was of Arab parentage but born in Java.) Popular music became, in the second phase, supra-ethnic, and at that point it provided a shared experience for consumers across the colony. And when radio arrived, the experience indeed became simultaneous.

But neither medium could afford to concentrate only on popular music. The religious and ethnic markets accounted for nearly 57% of record production in the second phase of recording. And while the motivation of the record industry in DEI was purely capitalist and market-driven, radio’s motivation ostensibly was not. It was presented as a service to the entire population, paid for by mandatory license fees levied on all purchasers of radios, and additional subscriber fees for listeners to stations other than the government-sponsored network (NIROM).⁴² Yet, as I argue in chapter 4, radio was driven, not by the commercial

⁴¹ It may surprise readers who know that Indonesia is today the most populous Muslim nation in the world to see Muslims described as a narrow target. While Islam was overwhelmingly the acknowledged or ascribed religion of the Pribumi population—out of 58.4 million Pribumi, the *Volkstelling 1930* counted 715,000 Christians and said “the vast majority” of the rest “are still Muhammadans” (1936: 55 & Table 15)—it was not yet so prominent in most people’s lives that a large segment would have bought the records of Qur’anic recitation or singing in Arabic.

⁴² The government closely supervised the broadcasting of news, speeches, and sermons on all stations, its own and the independents, ensuring that nothing seditious or inflammatory was aired, but it mostly left music alone. *Indonesia Raya*, the Indonesian national anthem *avant la lettre*, was banned, as was another song discussed in

market but by the imperative of popularity. Radio stations aimed to please their subscribers, giving them what they wanted to hear, and accordingly the stations held polls and attended carefully to comments from listeners. When stations considered adding new performing groups to their roster, they gave them trial broadcasts and asked listeners to vote (informally through letters and calls) on whether they should become regulars. Stations assessed their subscribers' ethnicities (on the basis of their names, which are often, in Indonesia, a sufficient indication) and felt obliged to broadcast music for those represented in their subscription list—but not for those not represented. (NIROM theoretically had to broadcast for all groups, though in practice it only targeted groups in Java and, later, Sumatra.)

While radio was, by virtue of simultaneity, a unifying medium, and popular music was, through accessibility and the use of a lingua franca, a unifying experience, DEI radio was nevertheless highly fractured. There were separate NIROM stations broadcasting in Dutch for “Western listeners” and in Malay for “Eastern listeners,” each wholly distinct in programming. The assumption was that the Western listeners did not want to hear anything Eastern, and vice versa. A similar assumption held within Eastern broadcasting: that groups did not want to listen to any music but their own. A station director wrote:

It is inevitably the case that the Chinese want to hear Chinese music, the Arabs want to hear Arab music, the Javanese Javanese music, and so forth. Every group wants its own music. (*Pewartu V.O.R.O.*, 1-15 October 1937)

Broadcasting was fractured, and the listeners were fractious. Several examples are given in chapter 4—East Javanese complaining about Central Javanese gamelan music, listeners

chapter 4, but in general there was no conflict concerning music. I do not know whether there actually were songs of nationalist spirit and protest that no one dared to put on the air, or whether popular music was simply docile and innocuous at the time.

in Sumatra asking for less Javanese music and more Melayu, etc. There was also a long-running controversy concerning the Islamic call to prayer, in Indonesia called the *adzan*.⁴³ In April 1936, exactly two years after NIROM began broadcasting, it acceded to pressure from listeners and began broadcasting the *adzan maghrib*, which should be heard just after sunset. (NIROM used a gramophone record, not a live *muezzin*.) Initially it was heard only in East Java, in the reception range of NIROM's Surabaya station. At the end of the year, however, technical changes made it possible for Surabaya broadcasts to be heard in Central Java, and NIROM also started broadcasting the *adzan* from its Bandung station. Listeners began to write in, complaining that the calls were being broadcast at the wrong time. Sunset in Central Java happens later than sunset in East Java, and earlier than sunset in Bandung. For that reason, Surabaya regularly broadcast the *adzan* at 18:00, and Bandung broadcast it at 18:39. But neither time was right for Central Java. There was no way for NIROM to broadcast it at the right time for all the regions, so NIROM decided in May 1937 to broadcast it only once a week, at sunset on Thursday, which is in Muslim reckoning the beginning of the day when men should go to the mosque for the noontime prayer. (On other days they can pray at home or at work.) NIROM announced that it would use the times printed in an official almanac for sundown in Central Java. This would of course be wrong for both East and West Java, but, NIROM said, the broadcast of the *adzan* was now meant to be symbolic, to remind people of their religious

⁴³ This account is derived from editorials in NIROM's biweekly program guide, *Soeara Nirom*, issues 4(3) and 4(8) in 1937 and issues 6(6) and 6(13) in 1939.

obligations. Listeners should remember that “when living in a society with many fractions, individuals must subordinate their personal concerns to general needs.”⁴⁴

Two years later, complaints were still coming in, and some Muslims were saying, in effect, if you can’t get it right then don’t broadcast it at all. NIROM again explained that the broadcasts were symbolic, and I agree, but I think what is symbolized is the persistent problem of identity politics in a diverse society. I don’t mean to minimize the importance of hearing the *adzan* at the right time—listeners told NIROM that hearing it at the wrong time made their hearts uneasy (*dirasakan tidak tenteramnja hati*)—but they could, after all, have turned the radio off and waited for the local *muezzin*-s. How else did they know the time for the *maghrib* prayer on every day besides Thursday?

Henry James has a phrase in *The Ambassadors* about “the futility of single rectifications in a multiform failure.” NIROM could not win in the fight over the *adzan*;⁴⁵ its efforts were doomed by a general inability of political leaders in the DEI to reconcile either the progressive Dutch vision of the colony or the nationalists’ dream of an independent Indonesia with the reality of the archipelago’s enormous diversity and its competing ethnic, religious, and regional interests. Robert Elson, in his book on *The Idea of Indonesia* (2008), says this was a fundamental weakness in the nationalist concept. He describes the “idea of Indonesia” as “strange”—he even refers to its “flakiness” (a surprising word)—because it was based on a notion of fundamental unity across the islands (69-70). He implies that this unity was illusory, a

⁴⁴ “Kepentingan seseorang itoe dalam pergaoelan hidoep dengan golongan dan bangsa jang banjak itoe, oentoek baiknja, haroes dilaraskan dengan kepentingan oemoem” (*Soeara Nirom* 4(8): 4-5, 16-30 April 1937).

⁴⁵ Frequently needing to translate from Malay/Indonesian, I find that language rich in succinct ways to express a no-win situation. Two of my favorites are *serba salah*, “wrong every way,” and *maju kena mundur kena*, “go forward get hit, go backward get hit”—in other words, “you get it coming and going.”

mystical construct deriving from the colony's physical contours. (If Holland had somehow expanded its empire to encompass Australia, would that too have been included in Indonesia's "fundamental unity"?) Federalism, he suggests, would have been a more realistic approach, but

federalism was never a serious priority for the major thinkers and imaginers of "Indonesia." They were attempting to create a solid unity, a singularity of nationness from the diversity of the archipelago, a deep consciousness of oneness. Federalism, underpinned by the notion that there existed prior to and more fundamental than the Indonesian nation a deep sense of specific local identity which needed to be accommodated and promoted rather than spurned and maligned, was often rejected out of hand. (68)

Most of the nationalists who asserted "the strange idea of Indonesia," Elson writes, "were only faintly familiar with the regions and peoples of the place they claimed as their own." He quotes Sutan Sjahrir, the nationalist leader (and first prime minister of independent Indonesia) who in 1935 was taken by ship through the eastern islands on the way to internal exile in New Guinea. Sjahrir wrote in a letter from that journey, "From a social point of view this part of Indonesia has almost no meaning" (quoted in Elson 2008: 69).

Why, then, Elson asks, did the idea of Indonesia as a unity triumph? Primarily because it was politically more practical:

The size, strength and unity attached to the idea of Indonesia provided a more promising political route than fractionalised attachments based on ethnicity, religion or region, both as a means to overcome perceived injustices and wrongs and as a road to the prosperity promised by modernity. (70)

But, he adds, "Ironically, the astonishingly uncontested acceptance and acceptability of the idea of Indonesia remained its greatest and abiding liability" (74).

If it was a failure of the idea of Indonesia not to grapple with cultural diversity, then NIROM was right, during the *adzan* flap, to urge listeners to subordinate their personal

concerns to those of the larger society. But there was little that either radio or gramophone could do to promote a musical federalism, a recognition of cultural richness stemming from diversity. One cannot blame the record companies, which simply obeyed the logic of the market.⁴⁶ So long as the records sold, the companies, like Merrill's dog, did not care what was on them: if there had been a market for the traditional music of, say, Flores or New Guinea, they would have made records for it.⁴⁷ And radio stations had fixed markets—the listeners within receiving range—and had no way to open new ones. Even if they had dared to broadcast something as unfamiliar (and unrecorded) as *gamelan Banjar* from South Kalimantan or *hoho* from Nias, they would have been unable to, for the stations had no budgets for bringing musicians from afar to the studios. The music they could program was limited to whatever was available close at hand, and to relays from other stations facing the same limitations elsewhere in Java.

So the idea of Indonesia that gramophone and radio offered was, on the one hand, a handful of “major” ethnic groups living in separate spheres, each with its own more-or-less traditional music sung in its own language—and each with significant purchasing power—and, on the other, a youthful generation sharing in a supra-ethnic, supra-regional, “modern,” urban popular culture using both a linguistic and a musical common tongue. And while we cannot say that gramophone and radio caused or created this opposition, we can note that it has persisted

⁴⁶ I do, however, blame Lokananta, independent Indonesia's national record company, for choosing to follow market logic when it could have used its governmental authority and prestige to record and honor the unknown musics from all around the country. (See Yampolsky 1987.)

⁴⁷ In the fond belief that there was a market for Balinese records, two German firms made recording trips to Bali in 1928-29 and issued around 85 two-sided discs. They did not sell, and eventually the dealer who stocked the records in Bali smashed them in a fit of frustration. Colin McPhee remarked, “They had been made, of course, to sell on the island—a naïve project, for no Balinese had money or even the desire for a phonograph. Why should they sit and listen to disks when the island rang day and night with music?” (1946: 72).

long after the colonial era and has led to the further isolation and near eclipse of traditional musics, and conversely the almost total dominance today of popular music in Indonesian media.

The reason for popular music's ascendancy in the colonial era is not, I think, simply youthful vigor and the failure of political leaders to encompass diversity. Drawing on Peter Manuel's work, I suggested at the start of this "Red Threads" section that the characteristics of popular music (secular entertainment character, urban orientation, rapid turnover, etc.) made it particularly well suited to the demands of media, and better suited than many other musics. I shall close by borrowing another idea from Peter Manuel. In a 2002 article (amplifying Manuel 1985) he proposes that the adoption by a society of "closed, internally structured musical forms, especially sonata form and 'song' form" goes along with "the emergence of capitalist modernity" in that society. He contrasts "song form" (we are not concerned with sonata form here), which uses "techniques of symmetry, recapitulation, and internal development to achieve dramatic climax and clear closure," with "open-ended, additive, or variative forms that are characteristic of pre-modern musics" (Manuel 2002: 47).

I find this an intriguing notion. Western popular melodies exhibiting "song form" (e.g., AABA) were adopted directly into DEI popular music (for use in the *stambul* theater), but I think one can argue more broadly that the three-minute time-limit imposed by 10" gramophone records helped to structure songs that might otherwise have gone on at length—in the manner of Manuel's "open-ended," strophic songs, to which singers might always add another verse and then another—into coherent *closed* structures, with a brief instrumental introduction, a verse (or, in the case of *kroncong*, half a verse), an instrumental interlude, a second verse (or

the second half), and a final chord or melodic phrase. In this example, the record format itself restrains and converts the open-ended form, and certainly in *kroncong*, when the thought of the first half of the verse is completed in the second half, and that's the end of the record, the structure provides "clear closure." Moreover, as I discuss in chapter 5 (in relation to Koesbini's "Oh, Boenga Mawar"), a change in *kroncong*'s performance practice after ca. 1914 led to innovations such as melodic repetition within the strophe and song-texts with a sustained, developed topic throughout the song. In short, we see elements of Manuel's song form emerging in recordings just at the time when a new bourgeois audience, increasingly integrated into the capitalist economy, is emerging in the DEI. Manuel's proposal would help to explain why popular music captured so much of the consumer class audience, and why its dominance has only increased since Independence.

Moreover, a linkage of popular music to an aesthetics of capitalism would help to explain one of the central questions in all of my research in Indonesia: why do Indonesians have so little respect for traditional music, why are they so willing to let it die away, so willing, in fact, to exclude it from their idea of Indonesia? No less a personage than Edi Sedyawati, for seven years the Director General of Culture for the Indonesian government and herself an accomplished dancer in the Javanese classical tradition, said in a 1994 speech (when she was already Director General) that

National culture is not the sum of ethnic cultures. National culture is something new, something that has arisen since the existence of the nation of Indonesia, thus [beginning] around 1928. (Sedyawati 1994)⁴⁸

⁴⁸ She refers to 1928 not as the beginning of Indonesia's existence as an independent state (which took place in 1945), but as the date of the famous Oath of Youth, *Sumpah Pemuda*, proclaiming the aspirational unity of Indonesia and Indonesians. I thank Rachel Cooper for bringing Sedyawati's 1994 speech to my attention and providing me with a tape recording of it.

Ibu Edi (as she is known) did not invent this position—its classic articulations come from Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana in the 1930s (e.g., Alisjahbana 1935 in Mihardja 1977). Its basic premise is that Indonesia is something different from the thousands of islands and hundreds of ethnic groups it comprises. National unity restarts the clock. This is, in my view, an extraordinarily puzzling view for someone like Edi Sedyawati to hold, given her own personal investment in Javanese traditional culture, but it is the same paradoxical view that Elson identifies in the nationalist leaders who formulated the idea of Indonesia. It makes sense, however, if “national culture” is understood to mean the culture expressing (whether symbolically or, as Manuel suggests, in a kind of “homology”) the capitalist and bourgeois values that have dominated Indonesia since independence and that dominated mass-mediated culture in the DEI before that.⁴⁹

* * * * *

I was once with the historian William Frederick in the Library of Congress, looking at a display of old maps of Java. They were puzzling: the island appeared to be turned upside down and placed at the top of the map. Only the coastline and coastal settlements were shown. When we look at a map of Java today we expect to find Jakarta (or its predecessor, Batavia) near the left (west) end of the island; here it was shown on the right. The interior was empty, and indeed, most of the island was not there at all. Bill Frederick recognized what we were seeing: this was a map from the point of view of a ship’s captain approaching Java from the north. A

⁴⁹ It is still not necessary, though, even for devout capitalists, to write off traditional music as valueless in the modern age. It can be valued for what it is and was, just as we value the music and art of other ages and other societies than our own.

navigator would not be concerned with the features of inland Java, but only the coast and features visible from the sea.

Recordings and radio in the colonial era also offer a map of Indonesia, seen through its music, and that map, too, registers certain features while omitting many others. The process of mapping Indonesian music into media, and the nature both of that map's inclusions and its omissions, are the subject of the present study.

CHAPTER 2

THE RECORD BUSINESS IN IMS: FIRST PHASE, 1903–17

“Japanese music is simply too horrible.”
—Fred Gaisberg in his diary, 1903

This chapter is concerned with the first phase of the recording industry’s activity in IMS, from the first recordings in 1903 through to mid-1917, when most recording in the region stopped for nearly a decade. After a contextual introduction concerning the expansion of the recording industry from its initial base in the United States and Europe to Asia, the chapter discusses the recording companies working in IMS, their business practices, and the dimensions of the IMS industry, culminating in a breakdown of the content of the recordings through 1917 by genre or category.

The Dutch East Indies (DEI) was a colony of the Netherlands, while the Malay/Straits region (M/S) was a British colony. Although the languages of colonial administration differed, a single lingua franca, Malay, was spoken throughout M/S and in the principal DEI cities, alongside the languages of the various ethnic groups. The two regions were also united in part by Islam, the religion of much of the population in both colonies. Despite dialect differences,

This chapter is a revised and narrativized version of part 1 of “The record industry in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore: the mechanics of an estimate of quantity,” pp. 181–93 in *The Lindström project: contributions to the history of the record industry, vol. 3*, ed. Pekka Gronow and Christiane Hofer (Vienna: Gesellschaft für historische Tonträger, 2011).

the near-identity of language promoted crossover of popular music repertoire and its recordings, and recordings aimed at Muslim believers also crossed between the regions. In those respects, IMS constituted a single market for records, though with clear sub-market differentiation in regard to recordings of the music of Pribumi (“native”) ethnic groups found in DEI but not M/S and Chinese ethnolinguistic groups prominent in M/S but less so in DEI.⁵⁰

The record companies working in IMS in this period were, with one late exception, European and American firms seeking to establish a broad, multinational catalogue of records. IMS was not at that time a major market but rather one of the many smaller markets that helped to constitute a worldwide industry. The record companies attended only sporadically to IMS in these years, and when World War I began in 1914 and disrupted trade between Europe and Asia, there had already been no recording in IMS for two years. Only one firm (the Gramophone Company, which had a factory in India and was thus less affected by the war) recorded in IMS (and only in Singapore) during the war years, and after 1917 those excursions also stopped. Aside from some 225 sides of Chinese music recorded by the Gramophone Company in Singapore in 1920 and 1922, recording did not resume in the region until the middle of the decade, by which time both the industry and the IMS market were changing.

⁵⁰ A 1939 letter from one of the managers of the Electric and Musical Industries (China) branch in Singapore says this explicitly: “Although the two territories are under different flags, they really form one group and one market” (H. L. Wilson to Columbia Graphophone Co., Hayes, 29 August 1939; typewritten letter in EMI Archives, no number stamp). Pekka Gronow (p.c., 2013) describes the early record market of the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland) in much the same terms: “one market with several sub-markets, [and] close commercial relations between the countries.” Singapore was the hub for these “close commercial relations” in IMS.

2.1. “Unsere Reise um die Erde”: The gramophone spans the globe

Here is how Franz Hampe, a recording engineer for the Gramophone Company, Ltd., spent 1909. In January and most of February he recorded in Moscow; in late February he recorded in St. Petersburg; in March in Warsaw. Then in April he set off on a tour of the Caucasus mountains and Central Asia. His long-distance travel on this eastward tour was by train, but for side-trips he must have used an automobile or gone on horseback. It was perilous territory: recording in the same region two years later, T.J. Theobald Noble, an engineer for Pathé Frères, was ambushed on a mountain road by Chechen bandits as he returned on horseback from a village. (Noble chased them off with a gun, but his horse fell over a cliff and Noble had to continue on foot.)

Hampe’s first recordings after Warsaw were made in Vladikavkaz in North Ossetia; then he went to Tiflis in Georgia, Merv in Turkmenistan, and Tashkent, Kokand, and Skobelev in Uzbekistan. In August he reached Kashgar in Xinjiang, and from there he headed back, recording in Margilan (Uzbekistan), Tashkent, Tiflis, Kutaisi (Georgia), and finally, in mid-September, Moscow again, where he observed his thirtieth birthday. In October he recorded in Dresden; in November in Bremen, Lvov (Ukraine), and Drohobycz (Ukraine); in early December in Budapest; and he closed out the year recording in Bucharest. Altogether he recorded 2,033 masters in 1909, a little over 102 hours of music. About 3/5 of the recordings were from the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁵¹

⁵¹ Hampe’s itinerary was reconstructed by Alan Kelly from the Gramophone Company recording logs and is published on the website www.recordingpioneers.com, curated by Hugo Strötbaum and dedicated to the careers of recording engineers in the era of cylinders and 78s. Some of Hampe’s 1909 recordings have been reissued on CD (Prentice 2002, Linich 2001). For Noble’s adventures, see his three-part article (Noble 1913b), posted on Strötbaum’s website. The ambush by bandits is in Part 1.

Franz Hampe is just one of the young men who spent much of the early period of the twentieth century traveling incessantly for recording companies. Another, who will return later in this chapter, is Henry L. Marker, an engineer for the American firm Columbia Phonograph Company Gen'l. Marker spent two years (1905-1907) recording in China, Japan, Siam, and Singapore. In January 1908, two months after returning to New York from Asia, he left again, this time for Brazil. He was in Mexico later that same year, and he went on another ten-month tour to Asia in 1909/10, and yet another, for 20 months, in 1911/12.

In those years, the record industry was in a frenzy of expansion from its original base in the United States, spurred by a technological change-over from Thomas Edison's phonograph, playing wax cylinders, to Emile Berliner's gramophone, playing flat discs.⁵² Cylinders had been marketed in Europe from the early 1890s but by 1900 were losing ground to discs, which had a longer playing time and greater playback volume, were easier (hence cheaper) to duplicate, and were less bulky and fragile to transport.⁵³

Disc recordings were introduced to Europe in 1898, when Berliner and his associates established The Gramophone Company Ltd in London and built a recording studio there. The

⁵² In the early period of recording history, the word "phonograph" referred only to machines that played recordings made on cylinders (or, in the case of the tinfoil phonograph, recordings wrapped around cylinders). "Gramophone," on the other hand, referred only to machines that played flat discs. A third term, "graphophone," originally designated a distinct variation on the principle of the phonograph, but from the mid-1890s it was simply a brand name, first for cylinder machines and later for disc machines. With the increasing popularity of the disc format after 1900, the distinctions between the terms blurred—to the extent that around 1903 Columbia marketed a "Disc Graphophone," and Edison in 1912 announced his "Diamond Disc Phonograph," both of which names would earlier have been seen as oxymora. In England, "gramophone" and "phonograph" are still distinguished terminologically, but in the U.S. "phonograph" has long been the blanket term for any sort of record player, disc or cylinder. ("Graphophone" is now obsolete everywhere.) To avoid confusion, I follow British usage throughout: "phonograph" in this study means a cylinder machine, and "gramophone" means a disc player.

⁵³ The chief European producer of cylinders, Pathé Frères, with over 12,000 titles in its catalogues in 1904, shifted its emphasis to discs by 1907 or 1908. Edison closed his European cylinder plants in 1909. Columbia, Edison's chief competitor in the U.S. and a disc producer since 1901, switched entirely to discs in 1912. Only Edison himself held out in the U.S., "doggedly . . . manufacturing [cylinders] until he quit the record business altogether in November 1929" (Gelatt 1977: 168). Except for Pathé, none of the European recording companies named in this paragraph bothered with cylinders; neither did Victor in the U.S.

American firms Victor, Columbia, and Edison controlled the United States market and soon began recording discs in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Cuba); European companies (first Zonophone, then the International Talking Machine Co., with its Odeon label) also ventured into Brazil and Argentina. The Gramophone Company and various French and German companies extended their reach to Russia, the Middle East, North Africa, and, finally, Asia. Victor and Columbia also recorded in Japan and China.

Foreseeing this wild expansion early on, two of the industry leaders, the Gramophone Company⁵⁴ and the Victor Talking Machine Company, entered into a non-competition agreement in August 1904, dividing up the world for marketing purposes.⁵⁵ The Gramophone Company would be entitled to sell discs and gramophones in Europe, the British Empire (except for Canada), Russia, Japan, and (evidently) Korea.⁵⁶ Victor got the rest of the world (again excepting Canada). Malaya and the Straits Settlements, two of the three regions of particular interest to the present study, were British colonies and fell automatically to the Gramophone Company; the third region, the Dutch East Indies, was not mentioned explicitly, but the fact that the Gramophone Company sold discs in DEI and Victor did not suggests that European colonies in Asia were considered Europe for the purposes of the agreement.⁵⁷ On the basis of

⁵⁴ Or, more accurately, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. From December 1900 to November 1907, this was the official name of the company, as the directors felt that typewriters were a more secure investment than gramophones and records. After 1907, the typewriter was dropped, and the company reverted to its original name. Discographers call records issued during the Gramophone and Typewriter period "G&T's." From here on, I shall not distinguish between the Gramophone Company and the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.

⁵⁵ This date comes from Michael Sherman (2010: 210). Geoffrey Jones (1985: 81) gives an earlier year, 1901. Although Jones usually seems definitive, 1904 is more plausible, as it would account for how the Gramophone and Typewriter could record in China in 1903. If the agreement had already been in place, working in China would have contravened it.

⁵⁶ The Gramophone Company recorded in Korea in 1906 but transferred its Korean masters to Victor in 1907 (Kelly, MAT103) and did not record in Korea thereafter.

⁵⁷ This understanding was formalized on 25 June 1907, when the original agreement was amended. Under the new terms, The Victor Talking Machine Company took Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, and the Americas. The

this 1904 agreement and subsequent ones, Victor and the Gramophone Company remained closely allied for many years.

The logic of all this expansion was simple: to sell records one had to sell machines to play them on, and to sell the machines one had to provide records people wanted to hear. There was a period of novelty when affluent consumers might be delighted to hear anything at all, but after the novelty wore off what they wanted to hear was, above all, their own music, and words spoken or sung in their own language. Thus, in order to open new markets, the industry needed to record practically everything everywhere—anything that had a hope of selling.⁵⁸ For some markets it was sufficient to record musicians living or touring abroad: while no commercial recording was actually done in Australia until 1925, recordings for the Australian market were made before that time by Australian performers overseas (Laird 2000: 22, 66-67). Similarly, some Argentine musicians traveled to the U.S. and France to make records to be sold in South America (Barreiro et al. 1999: 5:190).

In an account of Marker's 1905/07 Asian tour for Columbia, the London trade paper *The Talking Machine News* spelled out the rationale explicitly:

Talking-machine exporters know only too well that the most insignificant nations will buy talking-machines if they can hear records made by their own people. A cannibal would flee from a record of Melba, but would go almost insane with delight at hearing his own tongue emerge from the horn of a machine. And, so, the companies send their

Americas were defined as everything east of longitude 170°W—in the vicinity of Samoa—and west of longitude 30°W, plus the part of Greenland (Greenland!) lying east of 30°W. The Gramophone Company took Europe, Africa, the Pacific (west of 170°W), and all of Asia except for Japan, China, Korea, and the Philippines. The 1901(?) and 1907 agreements are described by Jones (1985: 80-84), who remarks that this was “a particularly wide-ranging example of the kind of restrictive international agreements made between American and European firms before 1914.” Jones does not mention Korea in connection with the earlier agreement. The separate status for Canada, also not mentioned by Jones, is found in Aldridge 1983[1964]: 45. Canada was the preserve of the Berliner Gramophone Company of Montreal.

⁵⁸ Of major populated areas of the world, only sub-Saharan Africa and the islands of Oceania (except for Hawaii) went unrecorded in the years before World War I.

own men, experts in record making, to every part of the globe. Native talent is secured and the people are given the music and songs which they love best. On reaching Tokio, Mr. Marker found the Columbia graphophone remarkably strong with the people and he set about making records which would increase the demand for graphophones. . . .⁵⁹

An in-house document of the Gramophone Company in London, the “Report on All Branches” for January 1909, made a similar observation, from closer to home: it reported a complaint from the Belgian branch about the French comic records that were supplied to it: “the Belgians, whose French is spoken much slower than in Paris, cannot follow the Parisian patter, unless it is spoken very deliberately.”⁶⁰

For an idea of how diligently the companies went about recording the world, consider some of the lists of their recordings:

- In November 1906, the German firm Beka advertised “the largest and most Comprehensive Repertoire which has ever been compiled,” itemizing it by language: “German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Austrian, Hungarian, Danish, Swiss, Dutch, Spanish, Chinese (Swatow, Guakau, Pekinese, Shansinese, Kiangnanese, Cantonese), Arabian, Turkish, Hindustanee (Urdu, Marathi, Gujarathi, Hindi, Tarsi [*sic*: Farsi]), Tamil, Malayian.” By February 1907 the Beka list also included Burmese and Japanese.⁶¹ (See Figure 2.1.)
- In July 1913, another German firm, Lyrophon, advertised its “Repertoire in allen Kultursprachen” (note the focus again on language): all of the European languages Beka listed, plus “Belgian,” Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, Swedish, Bohemian, Croatian, Slovenian; and, outside of Europe, Tatar, Creole, Arabic, Tunisian, Moroccan, Hindustani, Bengali, Tamil, Singhalese, Burmese, Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Siamese, Annamese, Northern Chinese, Southern Chinese, and Japanese.⁶²
- In one of several articles recounting his three-year tour for the French company Pathé in 1910-1912, T.J. Theobald Noble advertises for himself. First he lists the

⁵⁹ “Round the World with a ‘Talker’” 1908: 773. I thank Michael Kinnear for bringing this article to my attention. A paragraph with wording nearly identical to this appears in another article about Marker’s tour, “Making Columbia Records in Famous Jap Palaces” 1908: 38.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Jones 1985: 84. Jones summarizes the company’s conclusion from such examples: “Market penetration required trying to assess and record local tastes in each country.”

⁶¹ *The Talking Machine World* 2, no. 11 (15 November 1906), 20.

⁶² *Phonographische Zeitschrift* 14, no. 29A (19 July 1913), 655.

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Figure 2.1. A 1907 advertisement for the results of Beka's *Reise um die Erde*.

- countries where he recorded: England, Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Finland, Russia (“all parts”), Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Caucasus, Turkestan, Persia, Chinese Turkestan, India.

Then he provides an alphabetical list of “nationalities” represented in his recordings. In his eccentric and sometimes unrecognizable spelling and nomenclature, these are: Aderbideshanski [Azerbaijani], Afghan, American, Armenian, Arabian, Asenish [?], Austrian, Awarren [Avar], British (“including all the colonies”), Belgium, Bengalee, Bohemian, Bokharian, Bulgarian, Gabardinski [Kabardian], Canarese [Kannada], Chucus [Cherkess?], Czart [Sart], Dervish [?], Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Grusinian, Gooriski [Gurian], Hindustani, Ingoushie [Ingush], Italian, Kaldinski [?], Kivents [Khivan], Koomiki [Kumyk], Koordinski [Kurdish], Lesgin [Lesghian/Lezghin], Lettoish [Lett/Latvian], Mahratta [Marathi], Ossettine [Ossetian], Polish, Persian, Persian Tartar, Russian, Little Russian [Ukrainian], Swedish, Spanish, Svanetz [Svan], Sanscrit, Turkish, Turkoman [Turkmen], Tekints [Tekin/Tekke], Tchichence [Chechen], Tamul [Tamil], Telegu [Telugu], Yiddish.⁶³

In his seminal article from 1981, “The Record Industry Comes to the Orient”—one of the initial inspirations for my research—Pekka Gronow observes that in the early years of the twentieth century, “half a dozen record companies controlled most of the world’s fast-growing record market between them.” He doesn’t name them, but they must be, in the United States, Victor, Columbia, and Edison, and in Europe, the Gramophone Company, Beka, the International Talking Machine Company (label: Odeon), and Pathé, and perhaps also Lyrophon. (That makes eight, but between 1910 and 1913 Odeon, Beka, and Lyrophon were each bought up by the Carl Lindström AG.)

“All these companies,” Gronow continues,

used the same business strategy with varying success. They manufactured both recordings (discs or cylinders) and record-playing equipment (gramophones, phonographs), and tried to market them worldwide. Directly-owned subsidiaries were established in the most important markets; in smaller countries, their products were marketed through local agents. . . . Recording was not only done

⁶³ Noble 1913b, posted on Strötbaum’s website. Strötbaum came up with the plausible interpretations of Aderbideshanski and Koordinski. The other interpretations are mine.

in studios, but also by traveling experts, . . . who would set up their equipment for a week in a hotel room or theater, record a number of artists selected by a local agent, and then move on. (1981: 252-53)

The companies had no ideological or political commitment to the countries they worked in (aside perhaps from their home country). If records made for Asian markets sold well, the companies would produce more of them; if they did not sell, the company would stop recording there. In the event, Asian records sold moderately well in the years before World War I and quite well in the interwar period. Although the statistics available are not definitive, there are three suggestive sets of figures for the earlier period:

- Tables published by Rolf Krebs (1925: 44-47) show that in the years 1907-1913, 29.1 million discs were exported from Germany to other European countries (including Turkey), 5.6 million to Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay), and 1.9 million to Asia (India, DEI, and Japan).⁶⁴ These figures show, then, that Asia accounted for only 5% (and Latin America 15%) of Germany's gramophone record exports before World War One.
- In the early years, Beka seems to have been more invested in Asia than the German industry was as a whole. In March 1908, when the director of Beka suddenly died, Beka's financial backers approached the Gramophone Company (unsuccessfully, as it turned out) to see whether the British company would be willing to buy it. A statement of profitability was sketched out, showing, among other things, that in 1907/08 Beka's Asian operations (in India, China, Japan, Straits Settlements, and the Dutch East Indies) accounted for some 32% of its total income (Strötbaum 2011: 153).
- The Gramophone Company's world-wide sales figures show that in 1906/08 the Asian branch (based in Calcutta) accounted for 6.5% of the company's world-wide income. In 1909/11, the percentage was 7.5%, and in 1912/14 it was 8.5%. To put those figures in perspective, it is useful to know that for the same three triennia, sales in Britain, presumably the Gramophone Company's largest single market, accounted respectively for 25%, 30%, and 29% of the company's world income.⁶⁵ Thus Asia's proportion of the company's world income was about one-quarter of England's.

⁶⁴ Krebs gives his figures in *Doppelzentner*, 100-kilogram units. Gronow (1981: 283) calculates that before World War I, when gramophone records were thicker and thus heavier than in later years, 100 kilograms = 330 discs.

⁶⁵ Jones 1985: 88. Jones's source is an internal Gramophone Company document from 1921, "Report on Future Prospects of the Entire General Business of the Gramophone Company."

This, then, is the international commercial context in which the recordings I am concerned with in this chapter were made. From here on, I focus on commercial disc recordings of music from the region I call IMS (standing for the Dutch East *Indies*, the *Malay States*, both Federated and Unfederated, and the *Straits Settlements*). In the period before World War I, IMS was not yet a major market. I estimate the total output of records on all labels for IMS in the period 1903-1917 to be some 7,600 recordings (=sides)⁶⁶ (Yampolsky 2011a: 185).

I do not have comparable figures for other regions for the same time period, but this is surely low compared to the output for India or China. Production for even what one would expect to be a quite limited market, the Caucasus and Central Asia, has been estimated at 4,000 titles issued by the Gramophone Company alone up to 1917—more than half the total estimate for all companies in IMS through 1917.⁶⁷ Three labels active in Scandinavia before World War I produced among them a total of 13,000 titles for the four countries of the region in the years 1899-1916—171% of the estimated production for IMS in the comparable period (Englund and Gronow 2011: tables 3, 5, 6). But small as the IMS market may have been before World War I, it was attractive enough to bring the European companies back afterwards, and in the interwar period it became an important Asian market for records.

⁶⁶ Throughout this dissertation, whenever quantities of recordings are under discussion, a “recording” is a *side*, not a disc. After 1904, most gramophone discs contained two recordings, one on each side. When I estimate that some 7,600 recordings were issued for IMS before 1920, that means about 3,300 unique discs (assuming most discs were double-sided).

⁶⁷ Prentice 2002. The comparison is suggestive but not definitive, since we don’t know how many copies of each disc were produced, either in IMS or in the Caucasus and Central Asia. (The same problem holds for the Scandinavian figures in the next sentence above.) Paul Vernon points out (1994) that the average pressing quantity for a new disc for the Greek market was 1000 copies (he doesn’t specify what period or what label he is talking about), whereas Odeon’s 1931 Madagascar recordings had initial pressings of only 100 or 200 copies each. Nevertheless, in the absence of sales data and pressing quantities, the number of titles is the only measure we have of market activity.

2.2. The record industry comes to IMS: Companies and tours

Phonographs and cylinders

The talking machine first appeared in IMS as a curiosity. In 1882, five years after Thomas Edison invented the first version of his phonograph—consisting of a sheet of tinfoil mounted on a revolving cylinder and indented by a needle attached to a diaphragm—a Dutchman named de Greef gave a demonstration of it in Java. The machine reproduced sound very badly; the excitement that attended it was simply over the fact that it could reproduce anything at all.

Ten years later, an Englishman named Douglas Archibald brought an improved Edison phonograph to Southeast Asia. Using pre-recorded wax cylinders of speeches, songs, and instrumental solos and ensembles, he gave demonstrations of this “marvel of the nineteenth century,” first in Singapore, then in Java, traveling westward from Surabaya to Batavia, the capital of the colony. His phonograph was temperamental, perhaps because of the tropical heat, and some of his demonstrations failed. A disappointed Surabaya newspaper editor called Archibald a charlatan; Archibald administered a retaliatory drubbing to the editor but paid for the pleasure with three weeks in jail. In that same year, two other Europeans also demonstrated the phonograph in Java: one G. Tesséro, who gave rather high-toned presentations for scientific bodies and Javanese nobility, and a magician named J. Calabressini, who “combined conjuring tricks with a demonstration of recently invented European technologies” (Suryadi 2006).

By the time of these 1892 demonstrations, phonographs had already been marketed commercially in the United States for four years, but they did not catch on immediately in the DEI. They were, however, on sale there at least from 1899: a Dutch-language newspaper advertisement in November of that year for a store in Semarang listed phonographs among the toys (*speelgoed*) that have just been imported for the upcoming Christmas season.⁶⁸ By Christmas a year later the phonograph's product positioning was more upscale: the same paper advertised a store lottery in which the first prize was to be a gold watch, the second a repeating rifle plus a thousand bullets, and the third an Edison phonograph with fifty cylinders.⁶⁹ (The package of phonograph and cylinders was said to be worth f200.)

The cylinders sold to be played on phonographs in IMS were produced abroad and contained the standard European or American fare of the time: marches, laughing songs, opera and operetta tunes, popular ditties. But the phonograph was able to record as well as play back, so any IMS retailer might have recorded something on a blank cylinder and sold it in the store,⁷⁰ or an individual might have made a private recording and arranged with a shop to sell it. Observing that in 1892 G. Tesséro made a cylinder recording of *tembang Sunda* to

⁶⁸ Advertisement for H. Spiegel in *De Locomotief* [Semarang], 30 November 1899. My search for phonograph advertisements was rather unsystematic, and it may be that the machine was advertised and sold in the DEI before this date—indeed, it would be surprising if no effort had been made to import the phonograph between the demonstrations of 1892 and the 1899 Christmas season. As a point of comparison: the first phonographs were imported into Japan for sale in 1896 (Inoue 1977: 802). Michael Kinnear (2003: ix) says phonographs were imported into India for sale from the late 1880s on, but largely as a novelty. Pre-recorded cylinders were first sold in India ca. 1899 or 1900 (Kinnear, 2003: 335; 2000: 9).

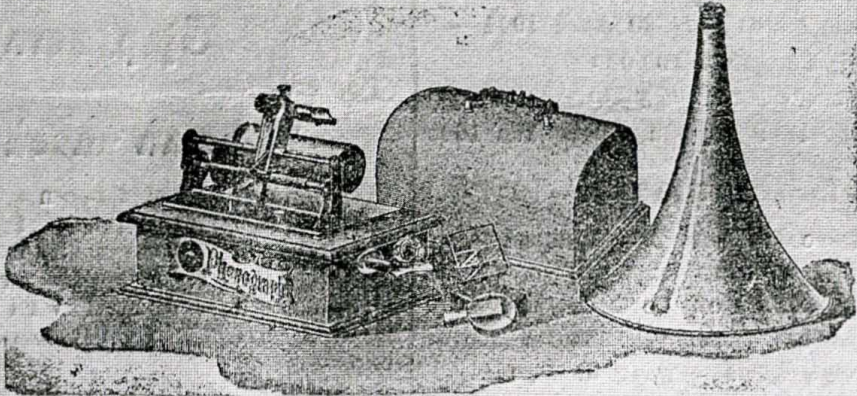
⁶⁹ Advertisement for H. W. Meijer-Hillerström, *De Locomotief*, 14 December 1901.

⁷⁰ This may be the kind of arrangement Kinnear refers to when he says that even before the first commercial cylinder recordings of Indian music were put on sale (in early 1904), two retailers “had been involved in making cylinder recordings more or less on a private basis for some years, although neither had at this stage made any serious attempt to make their recordings available on a commercial basis” (Kinnear 1994: 35; also Ghosh 1995). In Brazil, soon after the phonograph was introduced (1897), an enterprising retailer named Figner took to shaving the pre-recorded sound off imported cylinders and recording local music on the repolished wax (Franceschi, 2002: 31; for a technical description of the “raspador e polidor” process, Franceschi 1984: 22-24). There is no indication that this practice occurred in IMS, but it shows the adaptability of the cylinder medium and the ingenuity of its users.

demonstrate the capabilities of the phonograph, Suryadi proposes that this may have been the very first recording of DEI music.⁷¹ If it was, it preceded by perhaps a year Gilman's 1893 recordings of gamelan in Chicago. But neither Tesséro's nor Gilman's recordings were intended for sale. In fact the only evidence I have found that cylinders of IMS music were ever produced

TAN HOE LO & Co, Batavia.

BAROE DATENGI!!
 BAGOE3 MOERA DAN NJARING SOEABANJA TEGAS!
Americaansche Phonograph
 ROEPANJA SAPERTI INI GAMBARAN



Compleet harganja f 28.--

Mrechin bisa bitjera en bisa menjanji, birikoet 6 rolja (2 rol kosong 4 rol njang soedah ada la goe lagoe Olanda) dan dapet 1 pekakas boewat bikin lagoe lagoeja dan boleh djoeza dapet beli rol nja sadje.

Rol lagoe lagoe Olanda, soeara musik, piano dan njanjian roepa roepa iang membikin senang beti & f 1.

Rol lagoe lagoe Batavia, njanjian wajang tjokek dengan gambang, soeling en laen. Lagoe naer kotjok, kramat karem dan laen laen lagoe njang soeda terpill anak dan njanjian dengan Guitar viol, soeling en laen laen dengan ada nona nona meniauji lagoe lagoe atamboul, krontjong, bangsa wen en laen laen lagoe & ----- f 1.75

Bol kosong njang belon di isi lagoe. 1 Dozju " 6

Ini harga jang terabceet laen dari ongkoanja mengirim

TAN HOE LO & Co. Batavia

Figure 2.2. Advertisement for cylinders of "Batavian songs." *Taman Sari* [Batavia], 13 January 1904.

⁷¹ Suryadi 2006: 296. He cites the Semarang newspaper *Selompret Melajoe*, 27 September 1892, for the account of Tesséro's *tembang Sunda* recording.

for sale is a Batavia newspaper advertisement from January 1904 (Figure 2.2) advertising “rolls” of *kroncong* and theater songs from Batavia as well as music associated with the Peranakan Chinese (i.e., people of mixed Chinese and Pribumi parentage) of Batavia.⁷² The manufacturing firm is unspecified; it is probably the retailer. Given that I have no other evidence of IMS music on commercial cylinders, I shall confine myself to disc records from here on.

Gramophones and discs

It is not clear when the gramophone reached IMS: the earliest advertisement I have seen (like the first phonograph advertisements, in a Dutch-language newspaper) is from 1902, but gramophones may well have been imported earlier.⁷³ Again, the discs would at the start have had European and American content, but in May 1903, as part of the industry’s worldwide push to develop catalogues of local repertoire, a recording team from London arrived in Singapore to record.

*The Gramophone Company*⁷⁴

By 1902, the Gramophone Company had already amassed a large catalogue of recordings from England and western Europe, and its chief engineer, Frederick W. Gaisberg (always referred to in the literature as Fred), whom Emile Berliner had sent to London in 1898

⁷² Advertisement for the retailer Tan Hoe Lo & Co., Batavia, *Taman Sari* [Batavia], 13 January 1904. “Rolls [=cylinders] of tunes from Batavia, *wayang cokek* songs with *gambang*, *suling*, and other instruments. *Nur[i] Kocok*, *Kramat Karem*, and other especially pleasant tunes, also songs with guitar, violin, flute etc., with young women singing *stambul* songs, *kroncong*, *bangsawan*, and other songs. Price f 1.75 each.” (*Rol lagoe lagoe Batavia, njanjian wajang tjokek dengan gambang, soeling en laen. Lagoe noer* [sic] *kotjok, kramat karem dan laen laen lagoe njang soeda terpili enak dan njanjian dengan Guitar viool, soeling en laen laen dengan ada nona nona menjanji lagoe lagoe stambool, krontjong, bangsawan en laen laen lagoe* [sic] à f 1.75.)

⁷³ The 1902 advertisement appears in *De Locomotief*, 15 February 1902. Suryadi reports an 1895 advertisement in *Tjerimai* [Cirebon], 27 June 1895, but this appears to be a toy model (Suryadi 2007,6).

⁷⁴ For the business history of the Gramophone Company in general, see Jones 1985. For the company’s operations in India, see Kinnear 1994, 2000, and 2003.

to set up the Gramophone Company's recording studio, had recently finished a six-month tour to Russia and Poland. But, aside from 44 recordings of Indian and Persian music made in the London studio, the company had nothing from farther east than Russia. Then, in September 1902, the company sent Gaisberg on a ten-month trip to India, Southeast Asia, and the Far East. He traveled with a recording assistant (George W. Dillnutt, later a recording engineer in his own right) and a company representative to handle the business negotiations. His assignment, Gaisberg wrote later, was "to open up new markets, establish agencies, and acquire a catalogue of native records."⁷⁵ The party of four (the business representative brought his wife) traveled with thirty heavy cases. Their itinerary gives a sense of the pace of work and the quantities of recordings they achieved:

Left London, 28 September 1902. Arrived Calcutta, 28 October 1902.
Recorded in Calcutta, 8-18? November. 554 master recordings.
Recorded in Tokyo, 4-28 February 1903. 276 masters.
Recorded in Shanghai, 18-27 March 1903. 329 masters.
Recorded in Hong Kong, 23-26 April 1903. 147 masters.
Recorded musicians from Java and Penang in Singapore during one week in mid-May 1903. 214 masters, of which 210 were issued.
Arrived in Bangkok, 1 June 1903. Recorded 97 masters in four days.
Arrived in Rangoon, late June 1903. Recorded 159 masters in four days.
Arrived back in London, 5 August 1903.⁷⁶

Once made, the recordings were shipped to the company's plant in Hannover, Germany, for pressing. The cycle of shipping the wax masters to Germany, processing, cataloguing, and pressing them, and then shipping the finished records back to Asia took five or six months.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Gaisberg 1942: 48. See also Kelly, Perkins, and Ward 1978: 277-87. Regarding Gaisberg's autobiography, those authors remark (278): "It is an open secret that Fred's autobiography was 'ghosted' on the usual basis of reminiscences and facts supplied by the subject, either from recollection or by reference to the Company files." I have been told informally by specialists in European recording that there are many factual errors in the book, some of which were corrected in Jerrold Moore's biography of Gaisberg (Moore 1977).

⁷⁶ Gaisberg's own account of the Orient trip (1942: 53-65) and Moore's account (1977: 77-85) are very similar, but Moore adds some useful details. Gaisberg gives no dates; dates here are from Moore and from Gaisberg's published diaries (Gaisberg 1981: 1984). The recording quantities are derived from Perkins, Kelly, and Ward 1976: 72.

⁷⁷ Kinneer reports that the first shipment of the finished Indian records arrived in Calcutta in April 1903 (1994: 13).

The records appeared on the market as single-sided discs, with the label names Gramophone Record (for 7" discs) and Gramophone Concert Record (for 10" discs).⁷⁸

These Singapore recordings from May 1903 are the first disc recordings of IMS music.⁷⁹ In fact, they are, for IMS, both the *first* disc recordings and first *commercial* disc recordings. The gramophone, unlike the phonograph, had no "home recording" capability, so all recordings were professionally made for commercial release. They may even be the first IMS commercial recordings period, if the mysterious cylinders advertised in January 1904 were made close to the time of the advertisement.

IMS was at that time a minor market. Though the Gramophone Company recorded again in India in 1904/05, 1906/07, and throughout 1908, it did not return to IMS until 1909. By that time, the company had opened a pressing plant in Calcutta (December 1908), and it had switched from sending "experts" (the company term—and, at least in English, the industry term—for recording engineers like Gaisberg) back and forth from Europe for tours to stationing them in India for extended stays of several years, working alongside the branch manager. The first of the long-term experts was George W. Dillnutt, who as a young man of 20 had accompanied Fred Gaisberg on the first Asian tour in 1902/03. Will Gaisberg (Fred's younger brother, who had recorded for the company in Europe and Asia before settling in the home

⁷⁸ In January 1916, these label names, and also the name Gramophone Monarch Record (for 12" discs), were officially replaced in India and regions served by the India branch (including IMS) by the label name His Master's Voice. The company name, The Gramophone Company Limited, did not change. His Master's Voice had become the label name in Europe much earlier—in November 1910—for the reason that the company had lost trademark protection for the word "gramophone." (See Petts 1983: [60]. Petts does not explain how the Gramophone label name could persist until 1916 in Asia.) Many of the Asian recordings that had first appeared as Gramophone Concert (etc.) Records were later reissued on the His Master's Voice label.

⁷⁹ Perkins, Kelly, and Ward (1976: 57) state that they were made in "Malaya and possibly Java," but this is incorrect: all the recording was done in Singapore. As for the discrepancy between 214 masters used and 210 recordings issued: there are many reasons why a given master might go unproduced. Wax blanks could be defective, masters could be broken or become moldy in transit, there might have been an interruption during recording, perhaps the recording apparatus was joggled, or the performance was unsatisfactory. It is interesting to note, for the sake of comparison, that IMS had a much higher ratio of issued to recorded than did India in this 1902/03 tour: only about half of the 550+ Indian masters were actually issued. Kinnear remarks, "The fate of the unused matrices is not known, but it is quite possible that after some consideration they were rejected as not being musically satisfactory" (1994: 12). (I suspect that the Gramophone Company assumed Indian consumers would apply higher standards than would consumers in Singapore or DEI.) The ratio in China was more like IMS: Andreas Steen reports that only 17 of Gaisberg's Chinese masters went unissued (2006: 61).

office) wrote to Dillnutt, nearly two years into the latter's term: "My plan was that each man must take his medicine. My idea was to let each one of the new men have three years in India. In that way we enlarge the usefulness of all the experts."⁸⁰ With resident engineers, the company was able to record year-round in India and to make trips to Ceylon, Burma, IMS, and Siam whenever the company felt it needed new records. The company kept an engineer stationed continuously in India until well after World War I.⁸¹

Dillnutt began work in India in February 1908. Even with a resident engineer in place, the company did not think it worthwhile to record again in IMS until January 1909, when Dillnutt came down to Singapore from Burma. He recorded in IMS (Singapore, Penang, and



Figure 2.3. A His Master's Voice label for a recording made in Singapore, 1914-15.

⁸⁰ Will Gaisberg (Hayes) to George Dillnutt (Calcutta), 17.xii.1909. Typewritten letter in EMI Music Archives, replying to a letter from Dillnutt dated 24 November 1909 (not seen); no number-stamp on the pages.

⁸¹ George Dillnutt, 1908-10; Max Hampe, Franz's younger brother, 1910-13; Arthur S. Clarke, 1914-early 1915; and then Dillnutt again, 1915-21. This information comes from Kinnear 2003: 101, and from Alan Kelly (MAT 109, [2005]). I cannot say how much recording work was done in Burma or Siam after 1910.

„Maleische Records“

„November 1907“.

CATALOGUS

DER

Dubbel Bespeelbare

Maleische Gramophone Records



(Wettig gedeponoord Handelsmerk).

The American Import Company.

Hoofdvertegenwoordigers voor NEDERLAND & KOLONIËN

DER

Gramophone & Typewriter Limited

22a Amsterdamsche Veerkade.

Den Haag.

Figure 2.4. A 1907 catalogue listing Gaisberg's 1903 recordings in Singapore.

Java) from mid-January until late March or early April, then went on to Siam and Ceylon.⁸² The company mounted one more tour of DEI (late 1910/early 1911), but after that it concentrated on Singapore, sending experts in late 1911 or early 1912, in 1914, and for brief tours in 1916 and 1917. The company recorded Chinese music (Teochew) in Singapore in 1920 and again in 1922, but no other music in IMS until 1925. I estimate that the company issued 620 sides of DEI music, recorded in Batavia, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Semarang—and another 12 sides recorded in Paris in 1911.⁸³ The estimate for M/S is 1065 sides. Most if not all of the M/S recordings were made in Singapore.

*Beka*⁸⁴

The second company to launch a major Asian recording tour was the German firm Bumb & Koenig GmbH, later reorganized as Beka-Record GmbH. Established in November 1903, the company recorded for its Beka-Grand label in Europe, Egypt, and Turkey in 1904. Then in 1905 one of the company's founders, Heinrich Bumb, and two recording engineers, Willy Bielefeld and Willy Hadert,⁸⁵ started on a full Asian tour, lasting eight months:

Left Berlin, 5 October 1905.

Recorded in Constantinople.

Arrived in Cairo, early November 1905; recorded there.

Arrived in Bombay, 18 November 1905. Recorded in Bombay and Calcutta, resulting in circa 330 published sides.

Left Calcutta for Rangoon, 21 December 1905.

Arrived in Rangoon, 25 December 1905; recorded there.

Left Rangoon, 5 January 1906. Stopped in Penang and Singapore but did not record.

Left Singapore for Batavia, 14 January 1906.

Arrived in Batavia, 16 January 1906. Two days' recording, resulting in 32 published sides.

⁸² Dillnutt's itinerary inside IMS was sent to me by Alan Kelly (p.c., 1989). His itinerary outside IMS comes from Kinnear 2000: 28-31..

⁸³ These were Indonesian-language songs sung in art-song style, recorded by Mevrouw Otto Knaap, the wife of a prominent Eurasian musician and cultural figure in Batavia. See footnote 41.

⁸⁴ For the business history of Beka, see Gronow et al. 2011.

⁸⁵ The names of Bumb's engineers on the tour come from Hugo Strötbaum's website, www.recordingpioneers.com. Bumb does not name them in his articles for *Phonographische Zeitschrift* (see footnote 37 below).

Arrived in Singapore, circa 22 January 1906. Three days' recording, resulting in 26 masters, of which at least 23 (and perhaps all 26) were published.
To Bangkok (no recording). Left Bangkok for Singapore 31 January 1906. No recording in Singapore this time.
Left Singapore for Hong Kong, 12 February 1906.
Arrived in Hong Kong, 18 February 1906; recorded there.
Recorded in Shanghai for three weeks.
Recorded in Tokyo and Nikko, 130 masters.
Returned to Europe by way of Honolulu, San Francisco (arriving soon after the earthquake of 18 April), and New York.
Arrived back in Berlin, 17 June 1906.⁸⁶

Masters were shipped back to the Beka factory in Germany from various ports along the way for processing, production, and export to Asia. Discs made from the Bombay and Calcutta masters started to arrive in India in May 1906, and the Batavia retailer Tio Tek Hong advertised the 32 published recordings from Batavia (along with most of the ones from Singapore) in a Surakarta newspaper on 14 August 1906. The Batavia sides were the first IMS disc recordings to be made in the DEI.

Beka mounted at least one, and probably two more tours to IMS before mid-1909, recording in India, Singapore, Java, Siam, and China. In mid-1909, however, Beka stopped publishing IMS recordings under its own name and instead entered into an agreement with the import-export firm of L.E. Salomonson, based in Rotterdam and Batavia, to allow Salomonson's label, Tjap Bintang Sapoe, to publish Beka recordings (that is, recordings made by Beka engineers, using wax matrixes numbered according to Beka's coding, pressed at the Beka factory in Germany, and presumably recorded by Beka engineers).⁸⁷ Cooperative arrangements—between large firms and smaller ones, not between rivalrous equals—were not unusual in the recording industry at that time, given the difficulty and expense of bringing

⁸⁶ This itinerary is derived from Bumb's series of articles "Unsere Reise um die Erde," published in the trade paper *Phonographische Zeitschrift* (Bumb 1906). (An English-language summary by John Want was published under Bumb's name in 1976.) The number of Indian recordings comes from Kinnear 2003: 23; the date of Beka's arrival in Bombay is from Kinnear 1994: 45. The length of time in Shanghai is from Du Jun Min 2011: 61. The number of Japanese masters is from Inoue 1977: 803. The quantities for Singapore and DEI are from my own discographical work. Incidentally, there is some unnecessary confusion in the literature about the date of Bumb's return to Europe. The final *Phonographische Zeitschrift* installment states clearly that the date was 17 June 1906, not 17 July.

⁸⁷ The demonstrations that Bintang Sapoe's recordings were made by Beka engineers and establishing mid-1909 as the time of the handover from Beka to Bintang Sapoe are given in Yampolsky 2011a: 182-83.



Figure 2.5. Two Beka-Grand labels for recordings made in the DEI in 1906.

engineers and recording equipment from Europe to distant locations, and the large investment needed to establish a pressing plant. In effect, Beka hired out its engineers, equipment, and facilities to Salomonson. It appears to have made a similar arrangement with the firm of Katz Bros. in Siam at around the same time.⁸⁸

In August 1910 Beka was acquired by Carl Lindström AG, a Berlin-based manufacturer of gramophones that, unlike the Gramophone Company, Victor, Pathé, and other leading companies, was hampered by having no record-producing arm (Andrews 2002: 30). Beka was the first in a series of record-label acquisitions—Beka, Odeon, Favorite, Anker, Lyrophon, DaCapo—that by 1913 made Lindström one of the most powerful record-producers in Europe. Since the labels it acquired had recognized brand-names and profiles, Lindström chose not to dissolve or amalgamate them but to maintain them as separate labels.

According to my estimates, Beka issued only 126 sides for DEI (recorded in Bandung and Surabaya) and 110 for M/S (recorded in Singapore) between 1906 and 1909. It was much more active in the region after World War I.

*Odeon*⁸⁹

In 1907, another German company, Beka's principal competitor, made its first recordings in IMS. The International Talking Machine Co. mbH. (ITMC) had been established in Berlin circa July 1903 by an American, F. M. Prescott. Within a year he had built a record factory in Weissensee, Berlin, and had rocked the record industry by introducing double-sided discs on his Odeon label. Odeon followed the same pattern as Beka and the Gramophone Company, establishing itself first in the standard western European genres, and then quickly expanding eastward. Odeon sent the engineer John Daniel Smoot on recording expeditions

⁸⁸ More detailed discussion of Beka's Asian tours before World War I and its arrangements with Salomonson and Katz can be found in Gronow et al. 2011: 139, 144, and Yampolsky 2011a: 181-83. It is not clear why Beka chose to stop publishing under its own name in IMS and Siam. It may have had to do with the financial and administrative turmoil at Beka after the death of the firm's director in March 1908 (Strötbaum 2011)

⁸⁹ For the business history of the ITMC, see Andrews 2002 and Kinnear 1990.

into Greece, Turkey, and the Middle East from late 1903 into mid-1904 and again to the Middle East in early 1906. By the end of 1904, the company claimed to have 7,000 titles on record; by March 1906, the number was 11,000 (Kinnear 1990: 2260).

Odeon's first recordings for the DEI market were made in Amsterdam, featuring Mevrouw Otto Knaap, whose 1911 recordings in Paris for the Gramophone Company were mentioned earlier. These Odeon discs were advertised in DEI newspapers in mid 1904.⁹⁰ A Dutch-language Odeon catalogue dated August 1906 listed these 6 sides plus 4 more by Mevrouw Knaap and another 21 by one Njonja Adinda, a woman from Batavia living in Holland.

In 1906, ITMC opened a branch office to sell Odeon records in Calcutta, and late in that year it stationed a recording engineer, Alexandre or Alexander Nagel, in residence there. (This was more than a year before the Gramophone Company established its own resident engineer, George Dillnutt, in India.) Nagel's first recording tour began in late 1906 or early 1907 and took him on a circuit through India and then on to Singapore, Java, and Hong Kong.⁹¹ The masters were sent back to the Weissensee factory for manufacture, and the finished Java discs were available for sale in the DEI at least by February 1908.⁹²

Nagel continued to record in India and Southeast Asia (including Siam) into 1912. He did not record again in Singapore after the 1906/07 tour; although he apparently made three further tours to IMS after 1906/07, the last in 1912, these targeted only the DEI. Odeon's total estimated production through 1912 was 2614 sides for DEI, recorded in Amsterdam, Batavia, Bandung, Garut?, Sukabumi?, Cirebon?, Semarang, Surakarta, and Surabaya;⁹³ and 758 for M/S. Singapore is the only known recording location for M/S.

⁹⁰ Soerabaiasch Handelsblad [Surabaya], 16 May 1904. In that advertisement they were said to be "arriving soon" in DEI; an advertisement in *Ik Po* [Surakarta], 16 August 1904, said they had finally arrived.

⁹¹ Kinnear 1990: 2261, except for the identification of Nagel, which is found in Kinnear 2003: 230. I have not been able to find more precise dates of when Odeon was in IMS on this tour.

⁹² Advertisement in *Ik Po* [Surakarta], 25 February 1908. Kinnear reports that the Indian recordings were on sale in India from April 1908 (1994: 52).

⁹³ In the case of the locations with question marks, it is clear that the musicians were from those places, but it is not known whether the engineers recorded them there or brought them to a larger city like Batavia or Bandung.



Figure 2.6. Two Odeon labels. Top, ca. 1907 (courtesy of Jaap Erkelens): one of the “numbered *stambul*” songs. The matrix number, XT 97, is visible in the “run-off” area around the label. / Bottom, Sundanese music, ca. 1908.

In July 1911, Carl Lindström AG acquired the International Talking Machine Company and its Odeon label, but kept it, like Beka, a distinct label within the Lindström organization (Andrews 2002: 33). Not long after this, circa 1912, all Odeon production for DEI (and also for India) seems to have stopped. Michael Kinnear attributes Lindström's withdrawal from Indian recording to an "embargo being placed on German manufactured goods, during 1912 by the Government of India" (2003: 232; 1990: 2264). After an extensive search through trade journals, economic histories of India, and Indian trade statistics for 1912 and the years just before and after it, I have come to the conclusion that there was no such embargo. There was a *call for a boycott* of German goods, voiced at the All-Indian Sufi Conference held in Delhi toward the end of 1911 (probably in October). The boycott was intended to protest German support for Italy in the Turkish-Italian war of 1911-1912. I do not know whether the boycott was generally supported by Indian Muslims, or whether it even happened; but in any case it was not the sweeping embargo described by Kinnear.⁹⁴ And if there had indeed been an effective boycott, it might have discouraged Lindström from its Indian operations, but it would not account for Lindström's pulling out of DEI as well. I suggest instead that Lindström's analysts were dubious about the value of the Asian operations and decided to suspend them; and then World War I intervened and made it unfeasible to ship masters from Asia to Germany and finished records from Germany back to Asia. Odeon (and also Beka) returned to IMS in the second half of the 1920s, but by that time Lindström itself had been acquired by another firm, the Columbia Graphophone Company Ltd (that is, the U.K. Columbia, not the U.S. one) (Gronow 2009: 45).

Columbia Phonograph Company, Gen'l

One more company entered the IMS market in 1907. This was The Columbia Phonograph Company, Gen'l, the only American firm to record in IMS in the entire period

⁹⁴ For industry reports of the proposed boycott, see *Phonographische Zeitschrift* 12, no. 44, 2 November 1911: 1000, and *Talking Machine News* 9, no. 132, December 1911: 372.

before World War II. Columbia established itself in cylinder and disc production in the U.S. in the 1890s.⁹⁵ By the turn of the century it was active also in Europe, and by 1903 the London-based general manager of European operations said in an interview that Columbia had representatives or agents in France, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, and Egypt—and, he remarked, “We are even sending out Chinese records at the present time.”⁹⁶ There is also a report that Columbia recorded 900 sides in Japan in 1903 (Inoue 1977: 803). For the next several years, Columbia’s operations in Asia were limited to China and Japan; it seems not to have attempted to establish itself in India, probably figuring the Gramophone Company and Odeon had that market sewn up.

Columbia’s first venture into IMS came near the end of a thirty-month tour by the engineer Harry L. Marker, spent making recordings and “install[ing] recording plants in practically every country of importance on the way, that is where none already existed.” After roughly a year in Japan and another in China, Marker went to Singapore and Siam, arriving, by my calculations, in July or August 1907 and working there until October.⁹⁷ There is no indication that Marker recorded in the DEI on this trip.

Columbia did not follow up its 1907 trip to Singapore until 1911. Again, the recording engineer was H. L. Marker. He left New York in April 1911 for San Francisco and then sailed for Hawaii. He recorded in Honolulu, IMS (Batavia, Surabaya, and Singapore), Hong Kong, and Shanghai. He returned by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway and Europe, and made it back to his home in Orange, New Jersey, on 24 December 1912, just in time, *The Talking Machine*

⁹⁵ For the business history of Columbia—the U.S. one—see two articles by Tim Brooks in the *ARSC Journal* (T. Brooks 1978, 2002).

⁹⁶ “‘Talking Machine’ Talks, no. II: Mr. Frank Dorian and the Columbia Phonograph Company,” *The Talking Machine News* [1], no. 2 (June 1903): 25. I thank Michael Kinnear for bringing this article to my attention and providing me with a copy of it.

⁹⁷ Marker’s tour is recounted in two trade-paper articles published in early 1908: “Round the World with a ‘Talker’” and “Making Columbia Records in Famous Jap Palaces.”



Figure 2.7. Top: An early Columbia record, ca. 1907. The text in Jawi (Malay in Arabic letters) says, Robinson Piano / *Dondang Sayang* (the name of the song) / *Dinyanyi oleh* (sung by) Hasan. To left and right of the main text are the words *Lagu Melayu* (Malay song). / Bottom: An Anker disc, ca. 1912 (courtesy Rainer Lotz).

World assures us, “to spend Christmas day with his wife” (“Returns from Record Making Trip” 1913). This was the last Columbia tour to IMS.

I estimate Columbia’s production in IMS as 518 sides for DEI, recorded in Batavia, and 161 for M/S, recorded in Singapore.

*Anker*⁹⁸

Anker Phonogramm Gesellschaft was a much smaller firm than any I have discussed so far. Anker records went on the market in Germany in 1905, with a catalogue of European music. The firm experienced financial troubles in 1914 and was bought by another firm in 1916; it ceased as a functioning label in 1923. Unlike the larger German companies, Anker did not advertise itself as a label with wide Asian repertoire. Kinnear does not list it as working in India. It did, however, publish a substantial number of records of music from DEI.

The discographer Christian Zwarg, who has examined Anker’s German recording ledgers, observes (p.c.) that there is a blank period in Anker’s Berlin recording activities in Spring 1912, indicated by a gap in consecutive matrix numbers and recording dates. The matrix numbers of the Anker DEI recordings fit neatly into the number gap, strongly suggesting that Anker’s engineer made a recording trip to the DEI in the first half of 1912.⁹⁹ I estimate that Anker issued 478 DEI sides from that tour, recorded in Batavia and Semarang; recordings of Sundanese music may have been made in Bandung or Batavia. I have seen no indication that Anker recorded in M/S.

⁹⁸ For Anker’s business history, see Oirschot 1988 and Du 2011: 76-77.

⁹⁹ Zwarg writes (p.c.): “05131 is the highest German matrix before the huge gap (issued in January 1912, probably a Nov. or Dec. recording). Germany picks up again at 05763 or thereabouts, these are September 1912 issues, thus recorded most likely in July.” The Anker DEI matrix numbers I have seen run from 05276 to 05737, and there are at least 180 more DEI sides for which I do not yet have matrix numbers. Du Jun Min reports (2011: 93) that in 1912 Anker registered as a trademark a label design with a Chinese theme, so it is possible that the engineer also went to China in the 1912 tour, but the highest known DEI matrix number, 05737, is so close to the lowest German number after the gap (05763) that there doesn’t seem to be room for recording in China. Du does not indicate whether any Chinese Anker recordings were actually made; the company may simply have registered the trademark as a precaution.

*Lyrophon*¹⁰⁰

Originally a producer of cylinder recordings and phonographs, Lyrophon-werke Adolf Lieban & Co. G.m.b.H. was publishing disc records of European repertoire from 1904. Kinnear writes:

The Lyrophon Company is known to have sent recording engineers to Russia and Sweden and also out to the Middle East and Asia, and by 1906, the company claimed to name [*sic*] a catalogue of over 5000 recordings.

[Lyrophon] sent a recording operator out to India to make the initial recordings for T. S. Ramchunder & Bros., Bombay, in 1907, which were issued as 'Rama-phone Disc Record.' The collaboration . . . only lasted for the initial recording sessions, after which T. S. Ramchunder & Bros. acquired their own recording machine and conducted their own recordings sessions, although the pressing work was continued by the 'Lyrophon-werke.' (Kinnear 2003: 179)¹⁰¹

Du Jun Min indicates that Lyrophon recorded in China from 1908/09 until 1914, and that at some point or points during that period it made "Amoy-dialect" recordings for a Teo Chiang & Co., a retailer in Singapore, to be sold to the Chinese population there. Du does not say whether Lyrophon engineers were sent periodically to China or stationed there year-round; I suspect the former.

In his in-house "Report on The Talking Machine Trade of Singapore and Siam," written at the end of October 1911, James Muir, the manager of the Calcutta branch of the Gramophone company, wrote to the Head Office:

You will be surprised to find that the Company doing the largest business in Malay records today are one of the newest comers to the Trade. The Lyrophone [*sic*] Coy. They are represented in Singapore by a German firm - Behr & Coy, who having found out exactly what the Malay wanted, made contracts with some of the best Operatic Artistes and has placed a selection of records on the Market, which sell as fast as they can be imported.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ For the business history of Lyrophon, see Oirschot 1988 and Du 2011: 72-73.

¹⁰¹ I include this anecdote to demonstrate the fluidity of arrangements in the record industry.

¹⁰² James Muir (Calcutta), "Report on the Talking Machine Trade of Singapore and Siam," submitted to the head office (Hayes), 26 October 1911. Typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 30733.

Despite Muir's statement that it was, at the time, the best-selling label in Singapore for Malay records, few Lyrophon discs seem to have survived. I know of only two discs, double-sided. One of the discs is explicitly dated 1911 (Figure 2.8). Muir's 1911 report mentions Lyrophon only in reference to Singapore, but a letter from 1913 indicates that Lyrophon was also recording in Java.¹⁰³ Moreover, an advertisement demonstrating the breadth of Lyrophon's catalogue by listing all the languages represented includes Javanese and Sundanese along with Malay.¹⁰⁴ I have not seen any of these Javanese and Sundanese Lyrophon records.

Given the paucity of information, it is impossible to estimate the quantities or locations of Lyrophon's IMS recording, but we can make a stab at dates. In late 1911 Muir called Lyrophon "one of the newest comers," and in his April 1913 letter they had "newly made" recordings. Adding in the disc I saw that dates itself 1911, we may assume at least two tours to IMS, in 1911 and ?1913.

In 1913, Lyrophon was purchased by Carl Lindström A.G. Like Beka and Odeon after they came under Lindström's control, Lyrophon was maintained as a distinct label within the Lindström organization, but it became unprofitable during World War One, and by 1918 it had ceased to be an active label (Oirschot 1988: 129).

Bintang Sapoe

As we saw in connection with Beka, that firm in mid-1909 stopped issuing records of DEI music under its own name, and instead provided its master blanks, its pressing facilities, and the services of its engineers to the firm of L. E. Salomonson, which published them on its own

¹⁰³ James Muir (Calcutta) to the Managing Director of The Gramophone Company (Hayes), 6 May 1913. Typewritten letter in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 33049. This letter includes a copy of a letter from Schnitzler & Co. in Surabaya, who Muir hoped would become agents for the Gramophone Company in Java. Schnitzler's letter, dated 22 April 1913, states: "A lot of new records have been newly made by different Gramophone Factories for account of several importers. They are now throwing the goods on the market at a price, which can hardly leave them any profit." In his cover letter (6 May 1913), Muir clarifies: "The records he speaks of are, I take [it], those made by Columbia and Lyrophone [*sic*]."

¹⁰⁴ This is the list quoted earlier in this chapter, from *Phonographische Zeitschrift* 14, no. 29A (19 July 1913), 655.



Figure 2.8. Top: Lyrophon label for an M/S disc recorded 1911. / Bottom: Bintang Sapoe label for a *gambang piano* recording (see chapter 6) made between 1909 and 1914. (Courtesy of Rainer Lotz and Christian Zwarg.) The label bears the names of both the publisher (Salomonson) and the retailer (Soen Seng Tiang).

Bintang Sapoe label.¹⁰⁵ Some 1,100 DEI recordings (550 discs) were issued on Bintang Sapoe. They were first advertised in Batavia in May 1910, and new discs were advertised up to July 1914.¹⁰⁶ Bintang Sapoe apparently had excellent distribution, so much so that James Muir, the manager of the Gramophone Company's India branch, observed in a letter in June 1913:

The native trade [in Java] is almost entirely in the hands of the Odeon Coy ... and Solomonson [sic] of Rotterdam, - the records bearing the latter's labels are to be found all over this part of the East and I have heard them described as Lindstrom's. I have reason to believe they are made from Beka matrices.¹⁰⁷

Salomonson is the name of a prominent family of Dutch Jewish entrepreneurs and financiers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One branch of the family, based in Almelo, established a textile-production firm, G. & H. Salomonson, which later (in 1872) became the Koninklijke Stoomweverij in Nijverdal; another exported goods to Java; and a third formed the Internationale Crediet- en Handelsvereniging "Rotterdam," known as the Internatio, in Rotterdam. It is not clear where L. E. Salomonson fits into the clan's genealogy.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ There is confusion in recent discographical literature about the name of this label, and I fear I may have contributed to it. The most prominent words on any Bintang Sapoe label are "Pendapatan Baroe," which appear in a curving ribbon across the middle of the design. (See Figure 2.8.) The meaning of this phrase is not clear in modern Indonesian. It could mean "new discovery" (referring to the gramophone or to gramophone records), but I suspect rather that it meant "new acquisition"—thus, loosely, "just arrived" (from abroad, since these discs were recorded in the DEI but manufactured in Germany and then imported back into the DEI). The phrase "Tjap Bintang Sapoe," meaning "Comet Brand" (literally, *star broom*, or "sweeping star") appears in much smaller letters near the top of the design (along with a picture of stars and a broom). For years I was unsure which of these phrases was in fact the label name. "Pendapatan baroe" was so aggressively displayed, but "just arrived" seemed a strange thing to put on records that were meant to be sold to make room for records yet more recently arrived. (It is akin to leaving the "open" sign on a shop door when the place is obviously closed: the slogan used to apply but no longer does.) Newspaper advertisements were no help, since they did not name the label but simply listed the records, perhaps with a picture of the label. Eventually I decided that the word "tjap" (brand) was unambiguous, and that "pendapatan baroe" could only be an advertising slogan. And very recently (January 2013) I saw a printed record sleeve saying "Tjap Bintang Sapoe" without "pendapatan baroe," which gave me the definitive answer. But in the meantime I had referred in print and in correspondence with discographers to "Pendapatan Baroe" as the name of the label, and now some writings have appeared using that name.

¹⁰⁶ *Pantjaran Warta* [Batavia], 9 May 1910; *Tjahaja-Timoer* [Malang], 15 July 1914.

¹⁰⁷ James Muir (Penang) to [Arthur Clark], Managing Director of the Gramophone Company Limited (Hayes), 21 June 1913. Typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, no number stamp.

¹⁰⁸ He may be Leonard Eduard Salomonson-van Gelder (1859-1935?), the grandson of Joseph Salomonson (who was a brother of the Godfried and Hein Salomonson who founded G. & H. Salomonson) and the first cousin once-removed of the founder of the Internatio, Maurits Salomonson Hzn. (The "Hzn" indicates that Maurits was the son [zoon, abbreviated zn] of a man whose name began with H, i.e., Hein Salomonson, the brother of Joseph.) The fact that the home office of L. E. Salomonson's firm was in Rotterdam points to a connection with the Internatio side of

A firm called “L. E. Salomonson, Export” is listed in the January 1915 telephone directory for Rotterdam, and a *handelshuis* (“mercantile house”) bearing his name is listed in business directories for Batavia from 1914 (at least) until 1925.¹⁰⁹ L. E. Salomonson’s is known to have been in business in Batavia at least from 1910.¹¹⁰

Despite Salomonson’s European connections, there is no evidence that his firm issued any discs aimed at a European market. Conceivably the firm may have exported some of its DEI discs back to Holland for sale to Indonesians there or to Dutch people interested in or nostalgic for the Indies, but this is not the same as when a German label like Odeon or a French label like Pathé records hardanger fiddle for Norway and Georgian choruses for Tiflis. Salomonson, then, is the first example we have seen of a locally based producer, one that focused on its home region and did not simply count IMS as a stop on a regional tour. It is perhaps indicative of Salomonson’s insider understanding of its own market that Bintang Sapoe was one of only two labels to commit itself to the 12”/30 cm disc size, which played longer but was more expensive than the ordinary 10”/25 cm size.¹¹¹

Salomonson had a collaborative arrangement not only with Beka but also with the Columbia Phonograph Company, at least for a brief period. The newspaper account of Henry L. Marker’s round-the-world trip for Columbia in 1911/12 says that after recording in Batavia and Surabaya, “Mr. Marker went on to Singapore for L. E. Salomonson for Malay and Chinese records.”¹¹² The resultant recordings—I estimate 100 sides—appear on the Columbia label, not on Bintang Sapoe. They were “for” Salomonson in the sense that Salomonson contracted with Columbia to have Marker record them so that Salomonson could sell them through its own

the family. For more on the Salomonsons (but not, unfortunately, on L. E., person or firm), see Burgers 1954 and Zwaag 1991: 221-26.

¹⁰⁹ The Rotterdam telephone book is online at <http://de-wit.net/bronnen/tel1915>. The business directory consulted was the *Handboek voor Cultuur- en Handels-Ondernemingen in Nederlandsch-Indië* for most of the years 1914-25. I have not been able to consult the *Handboek* for years before 1914.

¹¹⁰ A Dutch genealogical website, <http://www.vandervelde.net/familie/menbun/agwg01.htm>, has an entry for a woman named Napoleontine “Suus” Buno Heslinga who worked at L. E. Salomonson’s in Weltevreden in 1910.

¹¹¹ The other label producing mainly 12” discs was Anker, which does not fit my argument so well. But Bintang Sapoe’s output of 570 discs, most of them 12”, bespeaks strong confidence in its market.

¹¹² “Returns from Record Making Trip Around World.”

outlets in M/S. Perhaps Salomonson felt that the records would not sell in M/S on the Bintang Sapoe label because the Dutch spellings (*tj, oe*) would seem too foreign.

I estimate that Bintang Sapoe published some 1,140 sides recorded in Batavia, Bandung, Cirebon, and Surabaya, along with the 100 Singapore sides it commissioned from Columbia (which are counted in the Columbia figures, not here).

2.3. *Business practices*

In these early years (indeed, up to 1925 or so), no recording company except Salomonson had its head office in IMS.¹¹³ All the others were based in Europe or the United States and sold their products (gramophones, records, and accessories) in IMS through local representatives.

Information on the business practices of the companies in IMS is dismayingly sparse and spotty.

I have gathered what I could. Since the Gramophone Company's operations are the best documented, much of my information concerns them; and since many of the documents I draw on are unpublished Gramophone Company letters in the EMI Music Archives, I shall quote from them at length.

Branches, agencies, agents

In its operations around the world, the Gramophone Company had a two-level system of branches and agencies. The staff of a branch was employed by the Gramophone Company and could be assigned whatever duties the company required, whereas an agency was an

¹¹³ Salomonson's true head office was in Rotterdam, but the record label Bintang Sapoe was almost certainly run out of Batavia. Its distribution was entirely limited to Southeast Asia.

independent entity that entered into a contract with the Gramophone Company primarily for the distribution of records and equipment to retailers. The branch supervised the agents and supplied them with stock at discount to sell and distribute. Typically, the agent firm was both a wholesaler and a retailer, and unless it had an exclusive contract with the company it could sell other brands as well as the Gramophone Company's.

The Gramophone Company had representation in India well before Gaisberg's 1902/03 tour: first an agency in Calcutta (from January 1900), then a branch there (from October 1901) (Kinnear 2003, 100-101). The task of the branch was to maximize sales through agencies and distributorships. The branch imported goods, distributed them to local agents, monitored sales and compliance, assessed market needs, and, beginning with the Gaisberg trip, provided a base for the company's Asian recording operations. The Calcutta branch was geographically the closest to IMS, and the engineers who recorded for the Gramophone Company in IMS typically traveled from Calcutta, where (from 1908) they were resident. After the pressing plant was opened in 1908, Calcutta gradually became the point of production for most Gramophone Company discs sold in Southeast Asia, including those of European content. M/S matrixes were pressed in Calcutta from 1912 or so onward, but the final groups of Asian masters and stampers, apparently including those from DEI, were not transferred from Europe to Calcutta until 1925 or 1926.¹¹⁴

The company marketed its products in the DEI not through the Calcutta branch but through F.W.J.B. Wortman, who had established a "Chief Agency [*Hoofd Agentschap*] of 'The

¹¹⁴ Kinnear 2003: 371, for the transfer of Indian, Burmese, and Ceylonese matrixes (1908-9), Siamese matrixes (1911), and Chinese (Amoy) matrixes (September 1926). He does not mention the Javanese or Malay matrixes. My remarks concerning these are based on my examination of datable discs showing the point of manufacture.

Gramophone Company' for the Netherlands, Belgium, and Colonies" in Amsterdam in 1898.¹¹⁵ (In 1906 the name was changed to The American Import Company.) Wortman's standing was apparently higher than a local agent and more like that of a branch. Discs were pressed in Europe, sent to Wortman in Holland, and then shipped by Wortman to *his* agent in Batavia, W. H. Hasselbach, who then distributed them further.

Wortman was not involved in marketing to M/S; instead, Gaisberg presumably appointed an agent in Singapore when he recorded there in 1903. That agent may have been the Robinson Piano Company, a department store with head offices in Hong Kong; Robinson Piano is known to have been the Gramophone Company's Singapore agent in 1909. But the company became dissatisfied with Robinson's performance, and late in 1909 it appointed a second agent for Singapore, S. Moutrie and Company, another department store, headquartered in Shanghai.¹¹⁶

Appointing a second agent did not resolve the problem. In October 1911, James Muir, the manager of the Calcutta branch, wrote to the home office that "as Retail Agents for the European Trade, Robinson & Coy and Moutrie & Coy cannot be improved upon." But retail was so profitable—"they get 50% Discount, and having no Duty [as Singapore was a duty-free port], have only to pay Freight out of this"—that, although they were the company's "wholesale distributing agents," they were neglecting the wholesale side of the business.¹¹⁷ Muir was

¹¹⁵ Belle 1989: 261-68. Belle includes a photograph of Wortman and reproductions of some of his letterhead correspondence from 1901-2.

¹¹⁶ In order to mollify Robinson, the company required Moutrie to pay Robinson a 5% commission on Moutrie's turnover; it also consented to take back 10% of Robinson's stock (and presumably assign it to Moutrie). (Will Gaisberg [Hayes?] to G. W. Dillnutt [Calcutta], 27 January 1910. Typewritten letter in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 83200.)

¹¹⁷ James Muir (Calcutta), "Report on the Talking Machine Trade of Singapore and Siam," 26 October 1911.

shocked at how small a market share the Gramophone Company held in Singapore and the Straits Settlements:

The Talking Machine Trade of the Port [Singapore] and that of Penang far exceeds any conception I had of it. I always had a suspicion that Robinson & Coy were not doing what they might I was not, however, prepared to find the Trade so large or our share of it so insignificant.¹¹⁸

Muir estimated the Singapore and Penang trade in imported records and gramophones “as being worth £50,000 per annum,” but

I do not think that we can hope to do a satisfactory business with this Territory under existing arrangements. If we are to be represented by Agents, we require a man or firm who will do practically nothing else but push our business and study the requirements of the Territory he controls. This it is almost impossible to find.¹¹⁹ An alternative to this is that Robinson & Coy should pay for the services of a man trained in our business, who would be attached to their Office, and be given Sole control under them of the Gramophone Department and report to us. Another is to open a Depot in Singapore and from it work Java and Sumatra (as regards the Native trade) Singapore the Federated Malay States and Penang, Siam, North Borneo &c. The expenses of such a Branch would not exceed [Straits] Dollars 1500 a month, and the difference between 33.1/3% at which Discount he would be able to do the bulk of his trade and the 50% we now allow to our present Agents would on a Turnover of Dollars 8000 per month more than cover this. The point is that we are allowing our Agents the maximum Discount in order to enable them to wholesale our goods throughout their Territory. This they are not doing adequately and as a consequence our position in Singapore is far from what it should be.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid. My ellipsis.

¹¹⁹ Elsewhere in the same Report, recounting a visit to Misquith & Co., the Gramophone Company’s Sole Agents in Rangoon, Muir wrote in exasperation, “It only goes to confirm what has been my experience hitherto that Shop-keepers are incapable, as a class, of handling a Wholesale Trade such as ours. The class of men they employ as Assistants is as a rule a poor one. A solution of the difficulty here might be that of insisting on Misquith employing a trained man from Calcutta or London.”

¹²⁰ Ibid. The exchange value of one Straits dollar (S\$1.00) was set at 28 pence in British currency. A British pound (240 pence) was equivalent to US\$4.86, and thus S\$1.00 = 28/240 of US\$4.86 = US\$0.567. Muir’s estimates of S\$1,500 per month expenses and S\$8,000 per month turnover for a Singapore branch come out to US\$850.50 and US\$4,536, respectively. His £50,000 estimate of the M/S trade is equivalent to about US\$243,000, no small sum in 1910.

Muir's was not the first proposal for reforming the IMS trade. An adviser to the company, Sidney H. Sheard, had made a similar recommendation in May 1908.¹²¹ And in 1909, George Dillnutt, the resident recording expert in India, who looked at things not from a branch manager's concern for profitability but from a recording engineer's concern for the safe transport of fragile recording masters, wrote:

I should propose this, that now the work [i.e., the 1909 recording tour to Singapore, Penang, Java, and Siam] is finished . . . let the Company keep track of the sales and see if it would not pay to have a small factory in Singapore (Free port). In this factory have 6 baths - 12 a day would take just a month for 300 records while the expert is going to, or through Java, Malay states, Straits Settlements, and Siam. Wherever he has just finished, send to Singapore. I suggest this, not from recording and safty [*sic*] points alone but from the big sales that will surly [*sic*] be here in these parts.¹²²

¹²¹ Muir mentions Sheard's suggestion for "a Singapore depot" in his cover letter to the October 1911 report.

¹²² In translation: Dillnutt proposed a factory in which to convert the original "wax" master recordings into the metal stampers from which salable records could be pressed. In such facilities, wax masters were placed in an electroplating "bath" that caused a negative metal master to "grow" on the original wax positive. (The metal master was negative in the sense that the grooves originally etched in the wax master were ridges in the metal master.) The metal master was separated from the wax master (destroyed in the process) and was itself electroplated to produce a positive metal "mother," which was in turn electroplated to produce negative metal "stampers," which, finally, were pressed, with a force of sixty tons, onto shellac "biscuits" to produce the records that went to shops. Dillnutt figured that with six electroplating baths his projected factory could produce twelve stampers a day, or three hundred in a month of twenty-five working days. He does not say whether the final records would be pressed in his Singapore factory or whether, instead, the stampers would be sent to Calcutta for the pressing stage; but at least his plan would eliminate the necessity to send the wax masters long distances. The susceptibility of wax masters to breakage or mold in transit was a problem for all overseas engineers. Dillnutt himself—whether through careless packing or simple bad luck—had a poor record in this regard and had been criticized for it by the home office, so he would have had a personal stake in the dream factory.

The source of the passage quoted is a handwritten letter from G. W. Dillnutt (Singapore) to Fred Gaisberg (Milan), 8 April 1909 (EMI Music Archives, pages number-stamped 56-64). For readability, I have amended Dillnutt's erratic punctuation. My ellipsis.

For Dillnutt's misfortunes in shipping masters from Asia, see Kinnear 1994: 25-38; but Dillnutt continued as a Gramophone Company engineer at least until 1933 (Vernon 1995: 285), so his difficulties do not seem to have hampered his career. The production process is described in lay terms in Copeland 1988 and A. Brooks 1928. For full technical presentations, see Seymour [1918?] or Bryson 1935.

Dillnutt's factory was never realized by the Company, and it was not until 1925 that the Company declared its intention to open a Singapore "sub-branch."¹²³

Returning to Muir: by 1913, he had become critical of the way Wortman was handling the DEI trade for the Gramophone Company, and he tried to persuade the home office to switch to another agent, the retailer W. Naessens & Co., with headquarters in Amsterdam and outlets in Batavia, Surabaya, Semarang, Yogyakarta, and Medan. "They have magnificent shops," Muir wrote,

the finest I have seen anywhere in the East, and are going to advertise extensively and start both in Soerabaia & Batavia, under experienced men, wholesale depts [sic] for the handling of the Native Trade and the Distribution of our goods to the Trade generally.¹²⁴

Muir offered Naessens

a wholesale agency with the right to retail in their Batavia, Bandoeng, Djokdja and Samarang shops, and at Deli Medan. They stipulated for the sole agency, and this I agreed to for Java only provided they retain Hasselbach [Wortman's Batavia representative] as a sub-agency.

Hayes, however, did not want to exclude Wortman, and as a result,

I have finally arranged that Wortman is retained and has equal rights in Java with Naessens. This was conceded very unwillingly by Naessens and it may lead to their being less enthusiastic about the Agency than they would otherwise have been.¹²⁵

The [revised] agreement [giving Wortman's American Trading Co "equal rights" with Naessens] . . . is for Java only, but with permission to ship to Sumatra and the other Dutch islands - my intention being, while allowing Naessens to to [sic] sell in Deli Medan where they have a branch in addition to Huttenbach [sic; =Hasselbach?], to create a similar wholesale agency in Sumatra, probably

¹²³ Unsigned letter from the Overseas Department of The Gramophone Company Ltd. (Hayes) to The American Import Co., Wortman's company, 5 January 1925. (Copy of typewritten letter in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 98467.) I have not been able to determine whether this branch was actually opened.

¹²⁴ James Muir (Singapore) to Mr. [Alfred] Clark [Managing Director, The Gramophone Company Ltd., Hayes], 16 June 1913 (typewritten letter in EMI Music Archives; no number stamp).

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Huttenbach and leave the smaller Dutch Islands as open territory for Java, Sumatra and Singapore. . . .

I had hoped that Nassens [*sic*] would have agreed to deal exclusively in our goods, but could not quite manage it. Sourabaia, Samarang and probably Bandoeng will do so, but Batavia is obliged for the present at any rate to stock some other makes, but will make our goods the principal feature of their Talking M/c [=machine] business and advertise them widely.

The agency is for 5 years subject to our right to create other agencies should their purchases in any one year fall below £6,000/- or to cancel it altogether should it fall below £3,000/-. They estimate that their own purchases for sale in their own shops will amount to £6,000/7,000/- annually, and they have undertaken to place our goods on wholesale terms wherever they find a Dealer European or Native willing to stock them, and to pay special attention to native trade and recording requirements. In order to do this they are creating a wholesale depot in Batavia under the charge of a man experienced in the Import Trade, and in touch with the dealers who will devote his whole time to it.¹²⁶

The Gramophone Company was the only one of the companies active in IMS to establish a branch office in Asia. The others had agencies, which functioned as importers of records (which at that time all came from abroad) and as distributors to smaller retailers down the line. Odeon's "sole agent for the Dutch East Indies" was known variously as Handelsvereniging B. G. & N. J. Stibbe, (offices in Batavia, Semarang, Amsterdam) or Handelsvereniging B. G. Stibbe ter Marsch & Co. (offices in Batavia, Semarang, Surabaya).¹²⁷ The former name is printed on the label of some Anker records, indicating that at some point Stibbe also brokered production of records for Anker.¹²⁸

In 1906, after the first Beka recording tour, an agency (The Talking Machine and Indian Record Company) was established in Bombay to import and distribute records in India and

¹²⁶ James Muir (Penang) to [Alfred Clark], Managing Director, The Gramophone Company Ltd. (Hayes), 21 June 1913. Typewritten letter in the EMI Music Archives; no number stamp. My ellipsis.

¹²⁷ Referred to in Dillnutt (Singapore) to F. W. Gaisberg (Milan), 8 April 1909.

¹²⁸ In addition to its work for Anker's competitor Odeon? Anker's recording in DEI apparently took place in 1912, after Odeon had stopped DEI activity; perhaps Stibbe cooperated with Anker to fill the vacuum in his business left by Odeon.

Burma (Kinnear 2003, 23). This agency may also have handled distribution of Beka records to IMS.

As for Columbia: I have seen four discs from Marker's first IMS tour, in late 1907. All bear label text saying "Robinson Piano," with additional text "made in Singapore" or "made in Bangkok." (See Figure 2.7.) Robinson was certainly the Gramophone Company's Singapore agent in 1909 and I surmised earlier that it was also its agent in 1907; but if it was, its relationship to the Gramophone Company rather surprisingly allowed it to also do work for Columbia.

Contracts

The crucial business instrument for the industry in Asia, if not the world, was a contract that shifted much of the risk of production of recordings of "international repertoire" to the distributing or retailing agents. Agencies received a discount on the price of goods, exclusive wholesaling rights (in the case of "sole agents"), and free printed catalogues and advertising matter. In return, they were committed to ordering a specified number of records or machines per year or achieving a specified amount of income from sales. Although at the very start, in the initial rush to acquire recordings, the companies may have taken the risk that there might be no market to develop, they soon came to rely on "the contract" to defray that risk.

Here is a statement of the practice, in a 1911 trade paper, referring to a distributor in an unspecified location that must be in M/S and is probably Singapore:

[Headline:] *Columbia goods in the Far East: Further proof of the influence and popularity of the talking machine throughout the Orient—The latest to take up the Columbia line is Sech Abdullah, an Arab of power and high standing in his community.*

One of the first contracts ever made by any company for the manufacture of records and other special product for the Far East was made by the San Francisco office of the Columbia Phonograph Co. many years ago in connection with the well-known house of Tenshodo, the Imperial jewelry house of Japan. Other similar Columbia contracts have followed in rapid succession all over the East, including a million dollar deal in China, and large contracts in Manila, India and elsewhere. Several important contracts have recently been closed, and the latest addition to the list of Columbia distributors is Sech Abdullah bin Saleh bin Moetlik. . . . [*The article continues with a description of Sech Abdullah, praising him as a man of influence and a "shrewd and most capable" businessman.*]

The contract with Sech Abdullah involves the manufacture of a large list of native Malay, Indian and Arab records of wide scope, and many thousands of dollars' worth of machines and other Columbia product, and calls for the fitting out of a special record-making expedition which will cover fields never before penetrated. In this case, as in that of the recently completed list of Hong Kong and Manila native records, no effort or expense is to be spared in securing the very best native talent, and the finest list of selections yet made, and as in the case of the lists mentioned, orders of record size are assured in advance.¹²⁹

Note the climax of the whole piece, reached in the last eight words.

"The contract" became the standard mode of industry activity. A long trade-paper article from 1913, recounting Henry L. Marker's 1911/1912 trip to Asia for Columbia, focuses almost entirely on Marker himself and his adventures, devoting a full column to the travel itself (trains, ships, lost luggage), then taking him to Hawaii, where he made

a wonderful series of Hawaiian records . . . [b]ut the records had nothing on Marker, for in Hawaii he made himself just as popular as the records have become in America. . . .

The article continues with Marker's social whirl, barely touching on the music let alone the commercial aspects of the trip, until, halfway through, we learn that Marker and a colleague

traveled together to Batavia, Java, where the Columbia contract was made with Tio Tek Hong, and where Mr. Marker made over five hundred records.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ "Columbia goods in the Far East." *The Talking Machine World* 7(6):30, 15 June 1911.

¹³⁰ "Returns from Record Making Trip Around World," *The Talking Machine World* 9, no. 1 (15 January 1913), pp. 43-44. I thank Ernst Heins for alerting me to this article.

This offhand reference is the first mention in the article of any business negotiation, and it is not to *a* contract but to *the* contract— one that anyone in the business would know was necessary.

As a rule, without the contract, the companies would not record. A proposed India branch recording trip to Siam was approved by the Will Gaisberg in the head office “provided contract with Nai Pah goes through.” Three weeks after Gaisberg’s letter, James Muir, the branch manager, replied without mentioning Nai Pah but saying that “owing to present Trade prospects in Siam [i.e., an unsuccessful negotiation?] . . . it is not now likely that we will undertake any recording in Siam during this financial year.”¹³¹

Here are some descriptions of contracts. The first is one we have seen already, between the Gramophone Company and Naessens:

1. “The agency is for 5 years subject to our [i.e., the Gramophone Company’s] right to create other agencies should their [i.e., Naessens’s] purchases in any one year fall below £6,000/- or to cancel it altogether should it fall below £3,000/-.”
2. When Dillnutt visited Bangkok in 1909, he entered into negotiations with a local businessman, Kee Chiang, who was eager to become the Gramophone Company’s local agent. There was a question as to how many Siamese records the Company was going to produce. Dillnutt reported that Kee Chiang promised to order “30,000 double sided if I only make 50 double sided, if I make 100 double sided he will order 50,000, this of course is his guarantee if he secures our agency.”¹³²
3. Dillnutt also wrote (1909) that a firm in Semarang was willing to place orders even before hearing the finished product (that is, on the basis of test recordings alone), but they wanted a three-month monopoly (exclusive sales right) on the finished records.

¹³¹ W. C. Gaisberg (Hayes) to James Muir (Calcutta), 4 August 1911 (typewritten letter, number-stamped 30232); Muir to W. C. Gaisberg, 23 August 1911 (typewritten letter, number-stamped 34857). Both documents in the EMI Music Archives.

¹³² That is: if Dillnutt’s recordings result in 50 double-sided discs, Kee Chiang will place a total order for 30,000 finished records (an average of 600 copies per disc). If the recording tour results in 100 discs, Kee Chiang will order 50,000 finished records (500 copies per disc on average). Dillnutt (Bangkok) to W. C. Gaisberg (Hayes), 20 April 1909. Handwritten letter in the EMI Music Archives; pages number-stamped 73-76.

Dillnutt turned them down, on the grounds that London had instructed that no monopolies be given. “But still for all this the peoples of Java want Agencies [*sic*] for our stuff, several of them saying that as soon as they get rid of their present stock, they will stock only to us.”¹³³

4. In the same letter, Dillnutt reported that Odeon had made a contract with a Chinese firm “for 50,000 records in one year provided he [the firm’s proprietor— almost certainly, Tio Tek Hong in Batavia] had monopoly for 6 months, also an announcement was made on every record of this man’s name.”¹³⁴ Note that Odeon granted limited exclusivity, where the Gramophone Company did not.
5. In April 1913, one of the Gramophone Company’s agents in Java, Schnitzler and Co., wrote to James Muir saying they “strongly advise you not to make any recording, as the market is in a most rotten state. A lot of new records have been newly made by different Gramophone Factories for account of several importers. They are now throwing the goods on the market at a price, which can hardly leave them any profit.” (The “several importers” here are those other companies’ local agents.)

Muir forwarded Schnitzler’s letter to the head office, with a clarification: “The records he speaks of are, I take [it], those made by Columbia and Lyrophone [*sic*] for Native account at 1/5 and 1/6, *Buyer paying recording.*” I don’t know what “1/5 and 1/6” means, but they are clearly contractual terms (relating to discounts, perhaps, or extension of credit), as is the stipulation that the buyer (the commissioning retailer or wholesaler) pay the expenses of recording.¹³⁵

Apparently there were two types of contracts.¹³⁶ One, which the Gramophone Company favored, simply committed the wholesaler or retailer to buy a stipulated quantity of machines and records; the Gramophone Company determined what would be recorded and it retained the right to market those records with other agents outside the territory contractually defined for the agent in question: the agent had rights to market them as long as it remained the company’s agent, but the records belonged to the Gramophone Company, and the right to

¹³³ Dillnutt (Singapore) to F. W. Gaisberg (Milan), 8 April 1909.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Schnitzler & Co. (Surabaya) to Muir (Calcutta), 22 April 1913; Muir to Mr [Alfred] Clark (Hayes), 6 May 1913. (Emphasis added.) Typewritten letters in EMI Music Archive, number-stamped 33049. What relation Schnitzler held to Wortman is not clear to me.

¹³⁶ My discussion here is based on deduction from official correspondence and from the evidence of discs (retailers’ names on records, etc.), not on examination of actual pre-World War I contracts, which may no longer exist (and which in any case I have not seen).

sell them could be moved to another agent. This is the type of contract we saw with Naessens and with Kee Chiang (examples 1 and 2 above). The other is the kind that Dillnutt refused with the firm in Semarang (the three-month exclusive sales right, example 3) and that Odeon made with Tio Tek Hong (spoken announcements on the records, example 4).

The first contract model worked for the Gramophone Company because it had a branch office in the region that could ride herd on its distributors and retailers and could, if necessary, withdraw its stock from one and shift it to another. The other companies (Odeon, Columbia, Salomonson), with no branch offices in IMS, may have used the first model in arrangements with key distributors, but they also used the second model, allowing their local agents to decide what they thought they could sell. The record companies sent engineers to record according to the agents' requests, while obligating the agents to buy a stipulated quantity of those records. This strategy shifted still more of the risk of production to individual retailers, but it gave them the option to fine-tune their targeting of consumers without battling an obtuse home office. (See "Trials of a branch manager," below.) In example 5 above, the phrase "buyer paying recording" indicates this sort of contract: the expenses of locating the artists and holding the recording session fell to the retailer ("buyer"), not the record label.

The Batavia retailer/wholesaler Tio Tek Hong's name is announced at the beginning of hundreds of pre-War Odeon records: a man's voice states the name of the piece or the type of music and then declares, "*terbikin oleh* [made by] *Tio Tek Hong, Batavia.*" On some of the records from Columbia's 1911/12 tour, Tio Tek Hong's name is both announced on the record

and printed on the label along with Columbia's name and logo (Figure 2.9).¹³⁷ Tio Tek Hong's name does not appear on Odeon labels, although his announcement is heard in the recording, but there are Odeon discs, sporting a unique black and gold label design, that say on the label that they are "terbiken oleh Toko Tan Tik Hing & Co., Semarang." Thus Odeon was willing to put the name on the label, for, one assumes, the right consideration. Many Bintang



Figure 2.9. Label for a *gambang kromong* recording made in 1912. It is shown as a Columbia record, but it is also described as *terbikin oleh* (made by) the retailer and agent Tio Tek Hong.

¹³⁷ Tio Tek Hong apparently considered that he had *made* the Odeon (and later the Columbia) records, in every respect but the mechanical one of recording and pressing. One sees this in the phrase *terbikin oleh* ("made by") for the spoken announcement, and in his 1908 newspaper advertisement for the recordings from the first Odeon tour: "These records are 27 cm in diameter, and I deliberately had them made double-sided (so one record has two songs on it), so that the price would not be too great, even though it is very expensive to make them." (*Plaat plaat ini besarnya 27 c.M. dan sengadja saja soeroe bikin doewa moeka (jadi satoe plaat ada doewa lagoenja) soepaja harganja tida djadi terlaloe mahal, maski onkosnja bikin itoe plaat-plaat ada terlaloe berat.*) Advertisement in *Ik Po* [Surakarta], 25 February 1908.) It was hardly Tio Tek Hong's decision to put recordings on both sides of the disc—Odeon's entire catalogue worldwide had been double-sided since 1904. The Odeon records bearing Tio Tek Hong's announcement were, however, the first double-sided discs to be marketed in DEI, and in this advertisement Tio Tek Hong claimed credit for the innovation.

Sapoe records, like the Tio Tek Hong Columbia discs, contain both a spoken announcement of a retailer's name (I have heard "*terbikin oleh Soen Seng Tjan, Batavia*" and "*terbikin oleh Lie Liang Swie, Surabaya*") and the name printed on the label (Figure 2.8).

There are also instances where no retailer's name appears in an announcement or on the label, but newspaper advertisements state that the records were "made by" a particular firm. (In the two cases I know of, the retailer was Ouw Tek Hok of Batavia.)¹³⁸ On the other hand, many Odeon records seem to have had *no* sponsor: they bear no retailer's announcement, spoken or printed, and if their sponsors were named in advertisements those advertisements have not yet surfaced. It is not clear who shouldered the risk on these records—Odeon itself (thus using the first contract model), or an unidentified sponsor (who perhaps got a good discount or a limited-term monopoly and found the other bells and whistles unnecessary).

The options to put the retailer's name on the label or announce it in the recording, or to get a special label design as did Tan Tik Hing in Semarang, must have been contractual extras, like whitewalls or a sunroof. Apparently not all companies offered them. While Columbia and

¹³⁸ A group of thirty-six Odeon sides of mixed content (Odeon 26201-26236, including Muslim religious music and recitation, Sundanese *tembang*, and *gambang rancag*), was advertised in a newspaper by a Chinese-Indonesian retailer in Batavia, Ouw Tek Hok, as having been "made" [*boeat*] by a firm with an Arab name, S. A. bin Zijn Alhabsi. According to the advertisement, Ouw Tek Hok had a contract with Alhabsi, giving Alhabsi and Ouw Tek Hok exclusive right to sell these discs. ("*Plaat-plaat jang terseboet diatas ini kita soedah bikin contract dengan toean S. A. bin Zijn Alhabsi, jang memboeat, tiada laen orang boleh djoel hanja kita berdoea sadja.*" *Pantjaran Warta* [Batavia], 17 August 1911.) The names of the two firms do not appear on the labels and are not announced in the recordings. The records bear the Odeon name and logo, and their issue and matrix numbers fit within Odeon series, but the records are not listed in an Odeon catalogue I have seen that does include numbers (26200 and 26247) on either side of this Alhabsi group.

Anker records were advertised as "Anker-brand gramophone records made by Ouw Tek Hok." ("*Plaat gramophoon merk Anker bikinan Ouw Tek Hok,*" as in *Sin Po* [Batavia], 4 July 1914.) As with the Alhabsi discs, the link between Anker and the "makers" is explicit only in the advertisements: there is no announcement of the firm's name on the records, and the labels carry only the Anker name and logo.

Bintang Sapoe allowed both announcements and names on the label, Beka allowed neither; Odeon allowed several dealers to make announcements on its normal label, but Tan Tik Hing's special label is the only one I have seen that carries a dealer's name along with Odeon's own. The Gramophone Company seems to have remained aloof from any negotiations beyond the bare-bones contract to take x number of records at y discount. Recall Dillnutt's statement that London wanted no exclusive retail rights given. (It did, however, permit exclusive wholesale rights.) There is also a revealing comment in the India branch correspondence. Muir had recommended that the Victor Talking Machine make some recordings of "Swatow and Amoy" music that could be sold to Chinese immigrants in Singapore. Victor had begun to discuss making the records with its agent Moutrie in Shanghai, and Moutrie requested

that the records should state that they were recorded under the direction of S. Moutrie & Coy. Ld. [*sic*]. . . We would, however, naturally prefer not to have any such wording on our Labels and no doubt this could be arranged. But if not and provided you saw no objection to it, we would rather accede to their request than be without the records.¹³⁹

Here we see Moutrie requesting just the sort of acknowledgment that Tio Tek Hong, Tan Tik Hing, and other dealers got from other labels; but the Gramophone Company "naturally" preferred not to make it.

These various contractual extras would have been attractive to retailers because they could serve as effective ways of advertising a firm's name. They seem to have been used to promote *localized* retailing: that is, for example, Tio Tek Hong and Soen Seng Tjan, retailers in

¹³⁹ James Muir (Calcutta) to The Gramophone Company, Ltd. (Hayes), 14 November 1911. (Typewritten letter in the EMI Music Archive, number-stamped 52196.) The non-competition agreement required that it be Victor, not the Gramophone Company, that recorded in China, but by the same token if records made from Victor masters were sold in Singapore, they would have to bear the Gramophone Company's labels, not Victor's. It was not uncommon for these two companies to share masters, but only with each other.

Batavia, put their announcements only on recordings of Batavia artists, while the Semarang retailer Tan Tik Hing's name is announced only on recordings by Semarang artists, and the Surabaya retailer Lie Liang Swie's name appears only on discs recorded in Surabaya. The records from a given place were presumed to appeal primarily to people of that place, so there was no need for a Batavia retailer to underwrite recordings of Surabaya musicians; nor would a Surabaya retailer pay to make recordings of Semarang or Batavia musicians. The announcements were also a kind of *branding*: Tio Tek Hong's name appeared on records by certain artists but not others, and certain types of Batavian content but not others.

Trials of a branch manager

IMS was a complex market—not more so than, say, India, but sufficiently fragmented to cause headaches for James Muir, manager of the India branch of The Gramophone Company. There were Europeans; Eurasians (some of whom wanted European music and some local music); small numbers of Indians and Arabs; devout Muslims, who wanted Qur'anic recitation and devotional singing; Batavians; Sundanese (from West Java); Cirebonese (also from West Java); Javanese (from Central and East Javanese, with different genres and tastes); immigrant Chinese, who wanted recordings made in their own Chinese languages; Peranakan Chinese, who wanted music with Chinese instruments (or local Peranakan performers) but sung in Malay; and the ethnic Malay or Melayu. While there was some overlap in taste, such that people in one group might buy records targeting another group as well as their own, in general each of these groups needed its own music. The Europeans were served by records imported

from Europe, and Indians, Arabs, and immigrant Chinese wanted records imported from their home regions, but recordings for the other groups had to be made locally.

The home office did not understand the basis of the Asian market, and certainly not these subtleties. We can infer from a letter from Muir to Hayes that the company asked him, in effect, why should we be making records for Chinese in Singapore, aren't they all coolies? And besides, won't the Cantonese records we already have suffice? Or, if we have to make new records, can't we just make them in Singapore? Muir replied:

[It is wrong to think] that we can record such records in Singapore - they must be recorded in China and the dialects required are those of Amoy and Foochow. It is from these places that the whole of the Chinese employed in Singapore, Federated Malay States, Java, Malacca, Borneo and Phillippines [*sic*], come; these when they leave China are generally of the coolie Class, but it is from this Class that the bulk of the rich Chinese in the Straits Settlements and surrounding territories have sprung.¹⁴⁰

The head office did not understand about the Malay population either. In late October, Muir sent a cable to Hayes:

Consider it essential to take 200 Malay records next month at cost of £400. Your sanction is required. Reply by telegram.

Hayes replied with a cable in faux-Latin commercial code, *Forcolaria Invetriata*

Dictionem, and then sent the decrypt by mail along with a skeptical comment:

If you think it necessary (Forcolaria) you may take (Invetriata) 200 Malay records. Send estimate (Dictionem).

It came as a surprise to us that you wished to put so much money into Malay recording, as up to the present we have been under the impression that Malay recording was not a money-making idea. Of course this might have been because we did not make the right sort of records; at the same time £400 for

¹⁴⁰ James Muir (Calcutta) to The Gramophone Company, Ltd. (Hayes), 14 November 1911. Typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 52196. Replying to a letter from Will Gaisberg, 27 October 1911 (not seen).

Malay records seems a large amount. We are awaiting your letters with great interest as we suppose your trip has in some way made such an impression on you that you have considered it necessary to make a large Malay catalogue--this, however, rather surprises us as we cannot imagine where you will get a sale for them. We had the impression that the Malays were mostly of the coolie class, and did not have much money.

Muir replied, with some heat:

It appears to us that a wrong estimate has been formed of the importance of Malay records by those who have hitherto reported on Trade conditions in Singapore or that their Reports have not received sufficient attention at your hands. You appear to have a totally wrong idea of the Malay as is evident from your having the impression that he is generally a coolie and has not much money. This is not the case, the Malay generally speaking is a Sportsman and a gentleman and spends his money freely on his amusements. We trust we are not wrong in our estimate of the importance of Malay records for Singapore. We do not think we are however, and if Mr. Hampe [Max Hampe, recording engineer] who is now on his way there succeeds in obtaining what is required, we look for good results.¹⁴¹

Part of Muir's difficulty was that as Branch Manager he had to service all of his markets himself. And in fact, since IMS was a comparatively minor market compared to India, he could not service it very well, having to devote most of his energy to India. (This is why he proposed a separate Singapore branch.) Other companies developed a different strategy, allowing the local agents to gauge their own markets.

Custom jobs

I use this term (borrowed from Gronow) for the arrangement between a record company and a second firm to use the facilities and services of the record company to produce

¹⁴¹ The text of Muir's cable is contained in the letter from Will Gaisberg (Hayes) to Muir (Calcutta), 26 October 1911, that also contains the translation of the coded cable and Gaisberg's comment (typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 43249). Muir's reply is in his letter to Hayes, 14 November 1911 (typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 51701).

records under the second firm's name.¹⁴² This is structurally close to the second contract model discussed earlier, but it requires special treatment from discographers, because the records produced under this arrangement are on a different label from that of the company whose services are contracted. This is the kind of arrangement that Salomonson had with Beka, allowing Salomonson to market discs (recorded by Beka) on its own label, Bintang Sapoe, with no indication of Beka's involvement. Salomonson was the first to establish this sort of relationship in IMS, and the only one before World War I, but after the war several firms without pressing facilities or recording engineers of their own entered into custom arrangements with European record companies.

According to Gronow, the practice was not unusual in the worldwide industry.

In Germany the smaller record companies were happy to do custom recording and pressing for interested firms. Thus, small businessmen in the smaller European countries and in Asia were able to start their own record companies, using their own trademarks and artists but employing German technology. (Gronow 1981: 270)

However, in Asia it was not only "smaller record companies" that did custom jobs. Beka did them for Salomonson (and Katz in Bangkok), as we just saw. And after World War I the Gramophone Company allowed many so-called "sister companies" to do their recording at HMV studios and pressing at the Calcutta factory, while publishing under their own label names, not as HMV discs.

¹⁴² These are sometimes called "third-party" deals, but the term is confusing: in a case like that of Salomonson and Beka, who is the third party? When Salomonson goes on, as it often did, to print on the label that the record was *terbikin oleh* (made by) another retailer, then indeed there is a third party; but Salomonson labels do not always show a retailer's name.

Intermediaries

A key question in understanding the nature of the commercial recordings for IMS is who made what would today be called the “A&R” (artists and repertoire) decisions—what genres should be recorded, what pieces, which players? The trade-paper accounts of the industry’s world-traveling recording engineers suggest that the engineers themselves—Gaisberg, Bumb, Nagel, Marker—determined what they would record, but this is implausible: they must have relied in large part on advice from local people.¹⁴³

Gaisberg, for example, had no expertise in the music of any of the Asian sites where he recorded, and he spoke none of the local languages. He therefore had to rely on local contacts to find artists, negotiate contracts, and choose repertoire, though he was not afraid to use his own judgment as well as or instead of his contacts’. The basis of his judgment must have been ideas of what might sell (or what kinds of ensembles his recording equipment could cope with), rather than aesthetic appreciation, for in his diaries and memoirs Gaisberg expresses incomprehension of Asian music. “Japanese music is simply too horrible,” he wrote in Yokohama; and later, in Shanghai:

[The Chinese] idea of music is a tremendous clash and bang. With the assistance of a drum, three pairs of huge gongs, a pair of slappers, a sort of banjo, some reed instruments which sounded like bagpipes, and the yelling of the singer, their so-called music was recorded on the gramophone. After making ten records we had to stop [temporarily]. The din had so paralyzed my wits that I could not think.

We made 325 records [in Shanghai] for which we paid \$4 each. . . . and there was not sufficient difference between any two to describe.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Gronow pointed this out (1981: 272-74), but I expand upon his discussion here.

¹⁴⁴ Moore 1977: 82-83, quoting Gaisberg’s diaries for 4 February 1903 (Japanese music) and 18 March 1903 (Chinese music). In Gaisberg’s published memoir (1942: 63), the Japanese comment is omitted, and the last sentence of the 18 March entry is rewritten to read, “To me, the differences between the tunes of any two records were too slight for me to detect.”

In Calcutta, Gaisberg's first stop in Asia, the Gramophone Company already had a branch, and the staff had lined up a group of performers to be recorded. Gaisberg, however, was dissatisfied: "The Anglo-Indians, whom we contacted and who were acting as our agents and factors, were living on another planet for all the interest they took in Indian music." So Gaisberg, accompanied by a police officer, began going to "the various important entertainments and theatres in the Harrison Road" to see for himself what the music was like (Gaisberg 1942: 54-55). He didn't like it much. Regarding his first occasion to hear the singer Gauhar Jan, who became one of the company's best-selling Indian recording artists, Gaisberg wrote in his diary (1981: 1767):

The music is very monotonous and every rhythm is repeated. A song consisting of 2 or 3 distinct phrases of music will be sung for perhaps an hour at a stretch, the only variation being in the drum traps [*sic*] or the introduction of some feat of vocalisation such as a run up and down the scale of seven notes.

These quotations indicate clearly that Gaisberg could not by himself make all of the choices of artists and repertoire for the Indian, Malay, Indonesian, Burmese, Siamese, Chinese, and Japanese recordings; he had to find reliable middlemen to advise him.

When he arrived in Yokohama in 1903, he worked with an Australia-born former British citizen named Henry Black, who had been in Japan for thirty-five years (and a Japanese citizen since 1894) and was a professional story-teller (*rakugoka*) in Japanese.¹⁴⁵ Black had been "engaged to help us to find artists and arrange their programs," and he and Gaisberg spent two weeks "visiting theatres and teahouses and holding auditions" (Gaisberg 1942: 59). Bilingual middlemen like Henry Black, versed in local culture, able to speak both to artists and visiting

¹⁴⁵ Henry James Black (1858-1923) is a person of some interest to scholars of Japanese modernity and of flexible identity. See Morioka and Sasaki 1983, and McArthur 2002, 2004.

recording teams, are shadowy figures in the history of Asian recording, but they must have played crucial roles.

One unusually well-documented middleman is Gaisberg's contact in Shanghai. "We . . . made arrangements with a George Jailing (or his Chinese name Shing Chong, of Honan Road) a *comprador* ('go-between') to arrange with artists" (ibid.: 62). This same man was also described (under the probably more accurate name of Yuen Sing Foong) in a *Talking Machine World* article in 1906. He worked for S. Moutrie & Co., Ltd., "manufacturers and dealers in pianos and organs and all musical instruments, as well as agents for the Victor Talking Machine Co., in China." The article says, in part:

Mr. Yuen Sing Foong has been many years connected with the talking machine business, and has established throughout China for the S. Moutrie Co. many branches, and has sold Victor talking machines and records to dealers in every city and large town in the Chinese Empire. Mr. Yuen speaks good English, although he has never been out of China. He is a great scholar, and speaks most of the different dialects spoken in China. It was through his influence that Geo. K. Cheney was able to secure for the Victor Co. the best talent in China. The records taken in China turned out so satisfactory that the S. Moutrie Co. have placed orders for thousands of them. In China there are many dialects spoken, and Mr. Cheney took records of all the principal dialects.¹⁴⁶

Yuen Sing Foong appears again, unnamed, in a 1909 letter from Will Gaisberg in the head office in London to George Dillnutt, then in Calcutta and planning a recording trip to Singapore:

Moutrie [*sic*] & Co [i.e., its Singapore branch] will be the ones who will give you the assistance in your recording, and they have written us wanting to know whether we think it advisable to have there [*sic*] Chinese interpreter come from Shanghai to assist you. They say that he is the man who assisted Fred while in China on the first trip, also Mr. Cheeny [*sic*] of the Victor Co. on his first trip, also the Columbia Co, and our Mr. Suez on his last trip for the Victor people did the entire trip with him.

¹⁴⁶ "Talking Machines in China," *Talking Machine World* 2, no. 6 (15 June 1906): 35. Moutrie's head office was in Shanghai, and the firm had branches in Tientsin, Hong Kong, and London. By 1909 it had opened an office in Singapore, and in the 1930s it produced its own record label, Chap Kuching.

Now, no doubt, this man would have to learn Singapore before he would be able to give you the proper assistance, but at the same time he speaks the language, and they say has a tremendous sway over the Chinese artistes.¹⁴⁷

Gaisberg evidently had good luck with his middlemen, but Beka was less fortunate.

John Want, in his summary of Heinrich Bumb's memoir of the 1905/06 Asian tour, recounts the troubles the Beka team had making their Calcutta recordings:

Their Bombay agent¹⁴⁸ had recommended a good friend in Calcutta who was a busy man: so he recommended another friend. The latter could not *personally* accommodate their wishes so he placed *his* friend at their disposal and this friend finally engaged a deputy—all at their expense. The deputy should have established the repertoire, recommended and engaged the right artistes and have attended the recording sessions to ensure that the right pieces were sung in the right languages, etc. The Germans soon realised that they would achieve nothing in this way—at least not in a foreseeable period. At every engagement long negotiations took place between all the friends which they could not understand. It was obvious that these negotiations had one purpose: to ensure that disproportionately large commissions would be distributed among the Indians. The Beka people saw they were to be cheated and after a short while decided to terminate the recording programme. They then engaged someone else and set him the task of hiring the artistes—this time working to a maximum price [i.e., a fixed upper limit to payments]. While he set about his work they paid a visit to Darjeeling. While they were there, the man in Calcutta made the necessary arrangements and when the Germans returned, the recordings were made successfully. (Want 1975: 730)

Even after the Gramophone Company began stationing its experts (engineers) in India for years at a time, these men had to travel incessantly throughout the region—India, Ceylon, Burma, Malay/Straits, DEI, Siam—and record artists in fifteen or twenty languages. It is impossible that the engineers became sufficiently knowledgeable in all these languages and all these musics to identify artists and choose the pieces they should record. Even if they had this knowledge, which they could not, their hectic recording schedule would not have permitted

¹⁴⁷ [Will Gaisberg] to G. W. Dillnutt, 17 December 1909, EMI Music Archives. It is the second sentence quoted here that permits us to identify Fred Gaisberg's "Shing Chong" with the *Talking Machine World's* Yuen Sing Foong.

¹⁴⁸ Kinneer identifies this agent as Valabhdas Runchordas (2003: 23).

them to line up recording sessions themselves. Inevitably they had to rely on local intermediaries. Unfortunately, once the rapid expansion of the record industry subsided, the trade papers stopped publishing admiring accounts of the recording experts' derring-do, so there is virtually no information about the engineers themselves or their A&R men.

We do get a glimpse of one intermediary in IMS. When George Dillnutt made the Gramophone Company's second recording tour of IMS in 1909, he was accompanied by F.W.J.B. Wortman, the Company's Chief Agent for the DEI, who was based in the Netherlands, and by Wortman's wife. Dillnutt wrote to Fred Gaisberg:

Mr Wortman is an ideal man for this country as far as recording goes, he speaks Malay fluently, because he is in touch with many people either relations or friends, his wife has relatives in every town, but it remains to be seen what business can be done when our native records are published.¹⁴⁹

Through his assistant Hasselbach, Wortman also made the A&R decisions when Max Hampe embarked on the Company's third recording tour of DEI, in 1910/11. Wortman wrote to Will Gaisberg in the Head Office in London before the trip:

On his arrival in Batavia Mr. Hampe will have every assistance from our local agent, Mr. Hasselbach, who will bring him the artists which we want recorded, and who will accompany him to Bandoeng where I have family connections, who will be very willing to give every assistance possible.¹⁵⁰

But the Gramophone Company's tendency to use outsiders like Wortman as intermediaries, no matter how well-versed they were in the local scene, simply could not be sustained.¹⁵¹ In the fragmented, localized market of the early decades of the century, only

¹⁴⁹ Dillnutt (Singapore) to F. W. Gaisberg (Milan), 8 April 1909.

¹⁵⁰ Wortman (Den Haag) to W. C. Gaisberg (London), 19 September 1910, replying to a letter from W. C. Gaisberg of 17 September 1910. Typewritten document in the EMI Music Archives, number-stamped 80549.

¹⁵¹ The Gramophone Company may have had better advisers in M/S—at least it saw fit to make four recording trips to Singapore in the period 1912-1917, but none to DEI after 1911.

retailers could judge what might sell in their locality. By 1913, retailers selling Gramophone Company records were complaining about Wortman. As part of his effort to unseat Wortman and give the Company's DEI agency to Naessens, James Muir wrote that he had visited Tels & Co., a "Commission House" in Batavia with a branch in Surabaya. Tels & Co. told him that

a few years ago they did 70/80% of our business in Java but had lost interest in it and practically dropped it owing to difficulties with Wortman in regard to breakages, exchanges of records, and the *rejection of their advice in regard to native recording*.¹⁵²

The strategy, adopted by Odeon and some other companies, of allowing retailers to do their own A&R work was much better suited to IMS, and I believe it accounts for the situation that Muir observed in 1913, which I have already quoted: that record sales to DEI "natives" were "almost entirely in the hands" of Odeon and Salomonson (which also used the strategy of retailer A&R). No documents or articles have survived to tell us whom those retailers hired as A&R men, but there is every reason to think that since the retailers themselves were local businessmen—most, if not all, Peranakan Chinese—serving local consumers, their A&R men would also have been Chinese or Pribumi with contacts among local musicians and aware of local audience tastes and enthusiasms.

¹⁵² James Muir (Penang) to Managing Director, The Gramophone Company Ltd (Hayes), 21 June 1913. Typewritten document in EMI Music Archives; no number stamp. (Emphasis added.) Wortman continued to manage the Gramophone Company's business in DEI (but not M/S) until early 1925—but he did not make A&R decisions after 1911, the year of the last recording tour to DEI before World War I. The next recordings in DEI were made in 1925, after Wortman had relinquished the DEI trade.

2.4. The recordings

I have published elsewhere a dense discographical article on the various numerical series used by recording companies in their issues for the IMS market (Yampolsky 2011a). From those series I constructed an estimate of the dimensions of the IMS record industry. Without going into the minutiae of that article, I provide in Table 2.1 the estimate for the years through 1917.

This estimate is based on the examination of *numbers*, not records—the numbers known for various issue series and matrix series used by the recording companies for their IMS records. The basic assumption is that these indeed belong to series and are not randomly assigned. One attempts to ascertain the number of items in each series by determining its starting and ending points, its principle of progression (usually but not always incremental by ones), and whether there are internal gaps or jumps. The more numbers one knows for a series, the more solid the estimate.

	DEI	M/S	TOTAL
Gramophone Company	632	1065	1697
Beka	126	110	236
Odeon	2614	758	3372
Columbia (US)	518	161	679
Anker	478	–	478
Lyrophon	–	12	12
Bintang Sapoe	1140	–	1140
TOTAL ESTIMATE 1903–17	5508	2106	7614

Table 2.1. *Estimate of total number of unique recordings (sides) produced for IMS, 1903–17.*

Knowing what was actually on the records is another matter. Ideally, one listens to the records themselves; next best is to examine them without listening. I figure that out of the total estimate of ca. 27,700 IMS recordings (1903-1942), some 8,000 to 8,500 (not counting duplicates) survive in collections in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Netherlands, Germany, England, and the United States.¹⁵³ (I myself have listened to perhaps 700 of them and examined close to 7,500.) From the record labels one can usually gather the titles of the pieces and the names of the performers; often there is also a “descriptor” characterizing the music or identifying its genre. Listening to the records can confirm or correct these identifications; otherwise one must rely on the labels, or, in their absence, on whatever information is contained in record company catalogues, or in advertisements for records. Unfortunately, this information is often incomplete, and it can be wrong. (So, indeed, can the information printed on the record labels. Sometimes even the title on the label is wrong.) Thus categorization of records known only from printed sources (including labels) is tricky and must be tentative. Nevertheless, putting together the printed information, knowledge of the standard repertoires of various genres, the recording histories of performers, and the range of meaning covered by descriptors, it is possible to assign most recordings to genre or content categories with reasonable confidence.

In Tables 2.2 and 2.3 I offer a summary breakdown by genre or category of all identified recordings made in IMS in the period 1903-1917; in the next chapter I give a corresponding summary for IMS recordings made from 1920 to 1942. (More detailed versions of each breakdown are given in Tables 2.6 and 2.7, in an appendix to this chapter.) The breakdowns are

¹⁵³ I have not been able to learn whether there are collections of colonial-era IMS 78s in Japan.

based on my discographical entries for about 19,000 IMS recordings, compiled from catalogues and advertisements, and from direct examination of records. For the period 1903-1917 I have entries for 5,084 recordings, amounting to 67% of the estimated total (7,614) for that period. I refer to this corpus for which I have discographical entries as “known” recordings or records. By far the largest category in both DEI and M/S is what I am calling popular music. During this period, the principal venue for live performance of popular music were the two most successful forms of commercial Malay-language theater—*stambul* in DEI, *bangsawan* in M/S. Musically, both theaters were highly eclectic, but they drew on different sources. *Stambul* music, discussed in more detail in chapters 5 and 6, had a core repertoire of tunes in Western harmonic idiom and instrumentation, but it could incorporate virtually any other kind of music—Malay, Arabic, Indian, Chinese, Javanese, European. The core repertoire of *bangsawan*, on the other hand, came from the music of the ethnic Melayu (Malays), the dominant ethnic group in Malaya (and in parts of Sumatra). In a forthcoming article (sent to me before publication), the Malaysian ethnomusicologist Tan Sooi Beng writes:

A large part of the recorded *bangsawan* repertoire of the pre-world war II period was derived from Malay folk social dance music (*ronggeng*) such as *asli*, *inang*, *joget*, and *zapin*. Other social musical forms recorded included the *dondang sayang*, *kronchong*, and various types of music with *gambos* accompaniment. Many of these social dance genres were performed at social occasions such as weddings, and other festivities in various parts of Malaya. They were adapted in the commercial urban *bangsawan* theatre, and performed in the stories and extra turns [songs and dances performed as interludes, outside the frame of the story]. (Tan forthcoming 2013)

Up to the 1920s, the instrumentation of Melayu repertoire, both in *bangsawan* and in *stambul* theater, was violin, frame drum, optional small gong, and optional accordion or

M/S KNOWN RECORDINGS		% of total M/S
M/S popular music (<i>Melayu repertoire & undifferentiated popular music</i>)	722	49.52
Chinese music & theater (<i>Teochew, Cantonese, Amoy, etc.</i>) / Straits Chinese music (<i>dondang sayang in Malay; instrumental patim & wedding music</i>)	454	31.14
Qur'anic recitation & Muslim devotional singing (<i>mainly in Arabic: adzan, dikir, Barzanji</i>) / Arabic secular music (<i>mawwal, qasidah, maqam</i>)	180	12.35
Gambus & harmonium (<i>gambus solo & gambus or harmonium ensembles, with singing in Malay or Arabic</i>)	58	3.98
Miscellaneous	44	3.02
TOTAL	1458	100.01

Table 2.2. Summary of M/S known recordings (sides), all labels, 1903–17.

DEI KNOWN RECORDINGS		% of total DEI
DEI popular music (<i>kroncong, stambul, Melayu repertoire, & undifferentiated popular music</i>)	1062	29.29
Peranakan Chinese music & narrative (<i>gambang kromong, gambang piano, patim, gambang rancak</i>)	770	21.24
Central & East Javanese music & theater (<i>gamelan, wayang orang</i>)	766	21.13
West Javanese music & theater (<i>Sundanese gamelan, kacapi ensembles, Sundanese wayang golek & wayang orang, reog & ogel, Cirebonese gamelan</i>)	601	16.57
Malay-language theater (<i>stambul & topeng scenes, comic routines</i>)	264	7.28
Qur'anic recitation & Muslim devotional singing (<i>mainly in Arabic: adzan, dikir, Barzanji</i>) / Arabic secular music (<i>mawwal, qasidah, maqam</i>)	121	3.34
Gambus & harmonium (<i>gambus solo & gambus or harmonium ensembles, with singing in Malay or Arabic</i>)	27	0.74
Miscellaneous	15	0.41
TOTAL	3626	99.99

Table 2.3. Summary of DEI known recordings (sides), all labels, 1903–17.

harmonium. The melodic idiom was modal, without harmony. (In the late 1920s and the 1930s both the instrumentation and the melodic/harmonic idiom became more Western.) Further research is needed before I can separate the Melayu repertoire from the more European repertoires of popular music. In Tables 2.2 and 2.3 above, and in corresponding tables in the next chapter, I simply lump Melayu repertoire in with other theater music and other repertoires using predominantly Western instrumentation. However, in view of the extensive discussions of popular music elsewhere in this study, it may be useful to itemize the category more carefully, and for this more detailed breakdown, shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5, I have attempted an impressionistic disaggregation of Melayu from the rest, based on the Melayu titles I recognize as belonging to the social dance or *ronggeng* category Tan describes; but I must stress that this is very tentative.

In these more detailed tables, *kroncong* are separated out from the “unspecified” popular music when the word *kroncong* appears in the song titles or in descriptors on the record label. *Stambul*, however, is not a reliable descriptor, since it could be used for any kind of music that might be performed in a *stambul* show—and we shall see in later chapters that the theater accommodated pretty much everything. Therefore I extract from “unspecified” only those *stambul* that have that word in their title, or that use a formal descriptor indicating what will be described later as one of the “numbered *stambul*.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ The reasoning is that a descriptor like “Stamboel II” or “Stamboel III” is likely to designate an element in the core repertoire of the theater, and in some cases a specific formal structure, while simple “stamboel” may say nothing about the nature of the music other than that it was popular enough to be taken up by *stambul* performers, for use in a scene or, more likely, a music or music-and-dance interlude.

Tables 2–5 reveal a crucial demographic contrast between DEI and M/S. In M/S, the language of the principal ethnic group was the same as the main language of popular music and theater—namely Melayu or Malay. This was a key reason for the strong presence of Melayu repertoire in theater music.¹⁵⁵ In DEI, however, there were Pribumi ethnic groups that maintained their own music and language apart from the lingua franca. In the period up to 1920, the Pribumi groups represented on records were mainly the Javanese (living in the administrative districts of Central and East Java) and the Sundanese and Cirebonese (living in West Java); in the 1930s, Sumatran ethnic groups (those known collectively as Batak, and also the Minangkabau) also gained a presence on records. The *stambul* theater, however, developed as a supra-ethnic entertainment, and accordingly it used the lingua franca, Malay, thereby excluding wayang stories and gamelan instrumentation.

Another demographic point: the M/S market had to serve a large population of immigrants speaking various Chinese languages, whereas the record-buying Chinese in the DEI had by the late nineteenth century largely ceased to speak Chinese languages and instead spoke Malay. Thus the music of the Peranakan Chinese in DEI was more easily incorporated into the general forms of popular music and theater. And vice versa: there was a considerable amount of repertoire shared between *gambang kromong* (the main Peranakan entertainment music, discussed in chapter 6) and the *stambul* theater.

¹⁵⁵ To anticipate a point I shall make later: the ethnic fragmentation that obtained in the DEI enforced a contrast between the “regional” music that “belonged to” specific ethnolinguistic groups and the popular music that used the lingua franca and hence could reach all the inhabitants of the colony. The same counterposition of regional (“ethnic”) and national (“Indonesian”) music obtains in modern Indonesia. In M/S, on the other hand, this opposition did not exist in the gramophone era, so the traditional Melayu repertoire became, in the record industry, simply an older style of popular music.

M/S POPULAR MUSIC (MSPM)		% of MSPM
1. M/S popular music (unspecified)	523	68.10
2. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	221	28.78
3. Kroncong	12	1.56
4. Stambul	11	1.43
5. Kembang Kacang	1	0.13
TOTAL	768	100.0

Table 2.4. *M/S popular music category, 1903–17 (known recordings), with tentative indication of Melayu repertoire.*

DEI POPULAR MUSIC (IPM)		% of IPM
1. DEI popular music (unspecified)	718	67.61
2. Kroncong	124	11.68
3. Stambul	90	8.47
4. IPM recorded in Europe	45	4.24
5. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	50	4.71
6. Pantun (=IPM?) recorded in Holland	26	2.45
7. Kembang Kacang	8	0.75
8. Military	1	<0.0
TOTAL	1062	99.91

Table 2.5. *DEI popular music category, 1903–17 (known recordings), with tentative indication of Melayu repertoire.*

Finally, looking ahead to the next chapter, it should be noted that certain categories will have quite different presence in the later phase of recording. The song-form *kroncong* (discussed at length in chapter 5) will become preeminent in DEI popular music and considerably more significant in M/S also, accounting for 13.08% rather 1.56% of the known recordings of M/S popular music. Peranakan Chinese genres, on the other hand, will decline greatly in importance to the industry, while the overall popular music category will gain, particularly in M/S.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2

Table 2.6. Detailed Genre Table, known recordings (sides), 1903–17 – M/S

Table 2.7. Detailed Genre Table, known recordings (sides), 1903–17 - DEI

Table 2.6. *Detailed Genre Table for M/S, known recordings (sides), 1903–17.*
Elaborated version of Table 2.2 in the body of the chapter.

DETAILED GENRE TABLE 1903–17: M/S	Gramo- phone	Beka- Grand	Odeon	Colum- bia (US)	Lyro- phon		TOTAL
A. M/S Popular music (MSPM)							
1. M/S popular music (unspecified)	298	9	198	16	2		523
2. Kroncong	9		3				12
3. Stambul	2		9				11
4. Kembang Kacang	1						1
5. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	158	15	46	2			221
B. Muslim religious & other Arabic							
1. Qur'an	1		12				13
2. Adzan	1						1
3. Dikir							
4. Barzanji	9		7				16
5. Other religious	3		8				11
6. Qasidah	11		7				18
7. Majrur [=Maqam, strings]	7		1				8
8. Nagam [=Maqam, vocal]							
9. Terbang							
10. Rudat							
11. Arabic language (unspecified – secular?)	49		12		2		63
12. Arabic?	2		2				4
C. Gambus & Harmonium							
1. Malay language	24	1	8				33
2. Arabic language	10	1	13				24
3. Unclassified			1				1

	Gramo	Beka	Odeon	Columb.	Lyro.		TOTAL
D. Malay & Straits Chinese							
1. Dondang Sayang	45		26	1			72
2. Patim			10				10
3. Wedding music	10	8					18
4. Immigrant groups							
a. Teochew (Chaozhou)	4		118				122
b. Cantonese			73				73
c. Amoy					1		1
d. Unspecified			157		1		158
E. Miscellaneous							
1. Indian music	1	8	2				11
2. Bangsawan theater	4		1				5
3. Melayu (ethnic group) theater							
a. Makyong	1		8				9
b. Boria	3						3
c. Mendu	11						11
3. Unclassified theater	2		2				4
4. Minang	1						1
TOTAL M/S	667	42	724	19	6		1458

Table 2.7. *Detailed Genre Table, DEI, known recordings (sides), 1903–17. Elaborated version of Table 2.3 in the body of the chapter.*

DETAILED GENRE TABLE 1903–17: DEI	Gramo- phone	Beka- Grand	Odeon	Colum- bia (US)	Bintang Sapoe	Anker		TOTAL
G. DEI Popular Music (IPM)								
1. DEI popular music (unspecified)	140	25	381	24	64	84		718
2. Kroncong	22	2	57	5	19	19		124
3. Stambul	17	3	52		9	9		90
4. Kembang Kacang	3		5					8
5. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	5		41		4			50
6. DEI popular music recorded in NDL	12		33					45
7. Pantun (=IPM?) - recorded in NDL			26					26
8. Military						1		1
H. Malay-language theater								
1. Stambul theater	7		116		27	12		162
2. Topeng theater	34		16		20			70
3. Music for Topeng theater	12		14		6			32
I. Muslim religious & other Arabic								
1. Qur'an			6					6
2. Adzan			2					2
3. Dikir	5							5
4. Barzanji			4					4
5. Other religious			12					12
6. Qasidah	10							10
7. Majrur [=Maqam, strings]	8		22					30
8. Nagam [=Maqam, vocal]			8					8
9. Terbang			12					12
10. Rudat						2		2
11. Arabic (unspecified)			25			4		29
12. Arabic?			1					1

	Gramo	Beka	Odeon	Columbia	Bintang	Anker		Total
J. Gambus & Harmonium								
1. Malay language	6		8		3			17
2. Arabic language	6		2		2			10
K. Peranakan (DEI) Chinese								
1. Gambang Kromong/Gambang Piano	93	10	69	8	138	39		357
2. Narrative with GK/GPiano	31	6	97		23	7		164
3. Unclassified Peranakan narrative			89					89
4. Unclassified Peran. music (Chinese)			55		5	1		61
5. Unclassified Peran. music (Malay)			14	1				15
6. Patim			33		2	1		36
7. Wedding music			2			1		3
8. Yang Kim			22					22
9. Peranakan theater (Malay) (topeng)	20							20
10. Totok Chinese music					1			1
11. Popular music with Chinese topics	2							2
L. West Javanese music & theater								
1. Sundanese gamelan	30	2	66	4	2	14		118
2. Kacapi ensembles	9		52			4		65
3. Wayang Golek	9		20		20			49
4. Wayang Orang theater (Sundanese)	7		33					40
5. Wayang Orang music (Sundanese)	14		9					23
6. Reog & Ogel	2		30		6	15		53
7. Celempung	2		28		2			32
8. Ketuk Tilu	16							16
9. Angklung	4		10					14
10. Penca	1					5		6
11. Unclassified Sundanese music			85					85
12. Cirebonese gamelan			94		6			100

	Gramo	Beka	Odeon	Columbia	Bintang	Anker		Total
M. Central & East Javanese								
1. Central Javanese gamelan	95	24	334		2			455
2. East Javanese gamelan			162					162
3. Wayang Orang theater (Javanese)			74					74
4. Wayang Orang music (Javanese)			17					17
5. Macapat			2			8		10
6. Langen Mandra Wanara			4					4
7. Santiswara			2					2
8. Kentrung & Gurit			30					30
9. Unclassified gamelan music			2		2			4
10. Unclassified Javanese theater	8							8
N. Miscellaneous								
1. Ambonese			1					1
2. European light classical & art song			4					4
3. Unidentified gamelan (incl Tanjung)		10						10
TOTAL DEI	630	82	2283	42	363	226		3626

CHAPTER 3

THE RECORD BUSINESS IN IMS: SECOND PHASE, 1920–42

3.1. *Recording returns*

The hiatus in recording lasted at least twelve years in the DEI, and quite possibly longer. We do not know the date of the final Beka recording tour for Tjap Bintang Sapoe, but the last records went on sale in mid-1914, so the recordings themselves cannot have been made later than early 1914, and they could have been made well before that and kept back by the publisher for release in batches rather than all at once. The other companies had apparently given up on the DEI still earlier: the Gramophone Company's last recording tour to DEI was in January 1911, and the other companies (aside from Beka engineers recording for Bintang Sapoe) seem not to have recorded there after 1912. All of this indicates that the DEI was not considered a hot market that needed to be serviced frequently with new product.

M/S seems to have been of equally low priority to the companies, except to the Gramophone Company, which made tours to M/S in 1912, sometime between January 1914 and June 1915, and again in 1916 and 1917. The fact that it had a pressing plant in Calcutta meant that it could continue to get records into IMS without experiencing the disruption of

This chapter is a revised and narrativized version of part 2 of "The record industry in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore: the mechanics of an estimate of quantity," pp. 194–212 in *The Lindström project: contributions to the history of the record industry, vol. 3*, ed. Pekka Gronow and Christiane Hofer (Vienna: Gesellschaft für historische Tonträger, 2011).

shipping caused by World War I, so it had the advantage over the other European companies—but while that may have been what caused it to keep recording in M/S, it did not induce the company to travel farther south and record in DEI.

After the War, the companies were slow starting up again, but when they did they apparently saw IMS, and especially DEI, differently. In 1929, which Gronow (1981: 283) says was the peak interwar year for the record industry worldwide, Germany exported more records to the DEI (971,000) than to any other country in Asia or Africa. (China was next, with 888,000, and British Malaya was third, with 380,000.) In 1930, the Gramophone Company's Calcutta factory produced more records than any other of the company's factories except those in Australia and England. (Of course, most of Calcutta's production was for the Indian market, not for IMS, but the figure shows the interest of Asian markets to the industry) (Jones 1985: 95).¹ Starting in the later 1920s, the main companies returned frequently for recording tours in the interwar years, sometimes annually, sometimes every other year—perhaps a bit slower at the height of the Depression, but even then the companies were more attentive than they had been before the war.

Of the pre-war companies, some failed during the war or soon after: Anker, Lyrophon, Bintang Sapoe. The Columbia Phonograph Co., the only United States company to show any interest in IMS, did not return (and no other US company took its place). The Gramophone Company, Beka, and Odeon all returned in the period 1925-27, and new European companies entered the market in 1927-28: the Columbia Graphophone Company, Ltd. (a British company)

¹ We should not get carried away. Jones also says that 40% of the Gramophone Company's market was in England, another 40% in continental Europe, and the remaining 20% was in India (including IMS), Australia, and Africa (Jones 1985: 94, based on a 1930 in-house report).

and the German Polyphon Werke AG. The smaller Dutch-German firm Ultraphon began recording in DEI in 1930, and the French Pathé Frères, which had long had a distributing branch in Singapore, started a record label for M/S in the late 1930s.

This same period, the later 1920s, saw the introduction of electrical recording, which offered great improvements in the sound of records. Electrical recording had been introduced in Europe in 1925, but it took a while for it to reach Asia. When The Gramophone Company and Beka returned to DEI, in 1925 and 1926 respectively, they were still recording acoustically, but Beka switched to electrical recording in mid-1927, and when The Gramophone Company arrived in IMS for its 1928 tour (beginning in June), it used the electrical process. Columbia, Odeon, and Polyphon² were electric from the start of their 1920s work in IMS.

In the record industry in Europe, these interwar years were a period of consolidation and reorganization. As we saw in chapter 2, Carl Lindström had acquired Odeon, Beka, and Lyrophon (among other labels) in 1911-13. In March 1925, the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd (UK) acquired its parent, the Columbia Graphophone Co. (USA), which had gone bankrupt, and in October of that year (or October 1926—sources differ) the British firm also bought Lindström. In 1928, still going strong, Columbia swallowed Pathé Frères. At that point there were three giants in the European industry: the Gramophone Company, Columbia, and Polyphon.

Then the Depression hit, and sales of records and gramophones collapsed. The industry was forced to consolidate and rationalize operations. One result was the merger of Columbia and The Gramophone Company, which in April 1931 became Electric and Musical Industries

² I use “Polyphon” as shorthand for the four IMS labels published by the German company that in 1927, when it first entered IMS, was named Polyphon Werke AG. See below, under “Companies and labels.”

Ltd., known to all as EMI. The new company took over The Gramophone Company's offices at Hayes, on the outskirts of London; Louis Sterling, the head of Columbia, became managing director. Now most of the European labels that published or would later publish for IMS—Odeon, Beka, Columbia (UK), HMV ("His Master's Voice," the Gramophone Company's main label), Pathé, and Parlophone (active in M/S after World War II)—belonged to a single company. But, like Lindström before it, EMI chose to allow the labels to continue to as distinct brands, operating more or less cooperatively, but also competing with each other for position within EMI.³

Before World War I there was only one "local" record label, Bintang Sapoe, and that was Dutch-owned. One of the most important developments of the interwar years for IMS was the emergence of a number of locally owned labels, which had arrangements with international companies whereby the majors provided engineers and pressing facilities to the local companies. The first was Tio Tek Hong Record, started in 1925 and run by the Peranakan entrepreneur who was the chief agent and distributor for Odeon and other labels before the war—the man (introduced in chapter 2) who had his name announced on so many Odeon and Columbia (US) records, "*terbikin oleh [made by] Tio Tek Hong, Batavia.*" Another Batavia Peranakan, Yo Kim Tjan, started his label a few years later, using, like Tio Tek Hong, his personal name as the name of the label. Three other labels were started in the late 1930s—Tjap Angsa in Medan, Canary in Surabaya, and Delima in Batavia. The first two were founded by Peranakan-s; Delima probably was, too, but I have not been able to find out anything about its management. In Singapore also there were local labels: Chap Kuching, started in 1934 by

³ For an enjoyable history of EMI, light on details but wonderfully illustrated, see Martland 1997.

Moutrie's department store, Chap Singa (1938), and at least one Chinese-language label, Quek Swee Chiang. What details I have about these various labels are given below.

The scope of IMS—or, more precisely, DEI—recording widened in the interwar years. Many of the principal genres from before the war continued to be recorded, but there were two important new developments. One is the emergence of what would today be called *pop daerah*, “regional pop”—songs in popular music idioms (Western scales and instrumentation, harmonized melody) but sung in “regional” languages, i.e., languages other than the lingua franca, Malay. The languages in this interwar period were Acehnese, Toba and other “Batak” languages, Makasar, Minahasa, and the Ambonese dialect of Malay. (Many other regional languages have been used in *pop daerah* since then.) These should not be confused with the songs in Javanese and Sundanese that were recorded with gamelan or *kacapi* accompaniment. The regional pop songs—which had no genre name and were instead identified on record labels just by the name of the region or ethnic group or by that plus “song,” “folksong,” *lagu* (tune), or similar terms—were, in contrast, efforts to bring modern, popular, urban idioms and regional languages (and audiences) together. Judging from the ones I have been able to hear, there were few or no traces of regional *music* in the songs; the key gesture was to use regional language. A melody with origins in the regional music might be used (“Batak folksong,”) but the arrangement would turn it into a pop tune. A similar process continues even today in Indonesian music, in the varieties of *pop daerah* and *dangdut daerah* (regional pop and *dangdut*), where the musical idiom and instrumentation is essentially that of an urban popular genre but the lyrics are in a regional language.⁴

⁴ See Yampolsky 1989 for a study of several *pop daerah* versions of a 1980s hit song.

The other important new development is the expansion of the industry beyond Java, to Bali and Sumatra. In Bali the effort was a failure (described in chapter 1, footnote 47), but in Sumatra it was a success. The industry cultivated Sumatran consumers with popular songs in Sumatran languages, but also exploring some of Sumatra's traditional music, particularly that of the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra.⁵ Odeon seems to have been the first label to record Minang music, making a handful of recordings ca. 1934, but after that there was a lull until 1938, when Odeon and Beka recorded Minang music in Medan. Tjap Angsa (which was based in Medan and may have been partly owned by a Minang or Peranakan from West Sumatra) and Delima recorded Minang music in 1939, and Columbia commissioned Tjap Angsa to make further recordings to be released on Columbia's new TP series, devoted to Sumatra. HMV also began recording Minang music in 1939.

At around the same time (ca. 1937) the record companies started recording "Batak" music—mostly Toba, but also Karo, Angkola, Mandailing, Simalungun, and Pakpak. Much of this was regional popular music, with Hawaiian ensembles or house bands like the "H.M.V. Syncopators" accompanying singers. (There was a propensity for singers to sing in duets or trios, which today seems a characteristically Toba element of "Batak Pop"; it probably has its origins in Protestant harmonized hymn-singing in Toba churches.) The Acehese songs that I have heard are also in the regional pop category. But I have also heard some more traditional singing, accompanied by a Toba flute or other instrument. (I am not aware of any recordings of the Toba *gondang* or tuned drum ensemble.)

⁵ This expansion was paralleled in radio, which in the later 1930s set up a transmitter to face west and broadcast directly to Sumatra.

Returning to the Minangkabau recordings: in chapter 1 I discussed ways in which various genres on records were used as emblems of social status and underwent changes in order to make them more suitably emblematic. When I was developing that idea, I was puzzled by the Minangkabau recordings. There are several contrasting categories, all apparently aimed at the consumers in the one ethnic group: highly traditional songs, sung in a distinctive Minangkabau idiom with *saluang* (oblique flute) or *rabab* (bowed lute) accompaniment; songs and episodes of *randai* theater; Muslim devotional songs, sung in Arabic, accompanied by a West-Sumatra-based *gambus* orchestra resembling an Egyptian *takht* of the Westernized form, with multiple bowed stringed instruments; and popular songs sung in the Minang language. (I do not know how these are accompanied; it could be with a Melayu-style ensemble of violin, accordion or harmonium, and frame drum, which is today common in West Sumatra.) The records I have encountered most often (which may therefore be the most widely distributed and purchased) are the recordings of *saluang* with voice (*saluang jo dendang*) and ones with *orkes gambus*. It is hard to reckon the status charge of these genres; it seemed rather that they reflected *stances* with regard to one of the crucial issues in Minang society in the colonial era: whether one oriented oneself toward international (that is, Middle Eastern) Islam or toward Minangkabau tradition (which, for one thing, is matrilineal, difficult to reconcile with Islam). In 2010 I had a chance to meet the Minang historian Taufik Abdullah, born in 1936, and ask him about these recordings. His opinion was that I would not see status maneuverings or hierarchy in the recorded genres, because Minang society at the time was egalitarian. Instead he thought the differentiation was geographical: the *saluang* records were aimed at the villages in the interior, the *darek*, and at people who had left those villages to look for work but who retained a

nostalgic longing for home; while the popular music recordings were aimed at people in the cities, where one could dance to gramophone records. *Orkes gambus* was aimed at both *darek* and city folk, but obviously those with a strong commitment to Islam. Taufik's interpretation is compatible with mine about stances, and it supports my impression that status and class definition did not play the role in Minang music (the recorded mapping of it) that it played for Peranakan, Eurasian, Javanese, or Sundanese consumers.⁶

3.2. Companies and labels: European

The European companies active in IMS during this period were:

The Gramophone Company. The Gramophone Company was the first European firm to resume recording in IMS. By the time it did, it had completely converted to the His Master's Voice (HMV) label name. In Malay the label was known and advertised as *Tjap Andjing*, "Dog Brand," though for Qur'anic recitation and other records aimed at devout Muslims it substituted either the "recording angel" logo or an ornamental design.⁷ HMV was the most active label in both sectors of IMS after 1920, and it was also assiduous in publishing annual catalogues and monthly or bimonthly catalogue supplements, often including song lyrics and pictures of singers. A number of star female singers regularly recorded for HMV, among them Miss Norlia (known in M/S as Che Norlia), Miss Jacoba Regar (or Siregar, from North Sumatra but living in Java), and the Sundanese singer Nji Raden Hadji Djoelaeha. HMV also had the pre-

⁶ A tidbit: Pak Taufik told me that one day an itinerant entertainer came, uninvited, to his family's house in Batusangkar, a town in the *darek*. The entertainer said he would perform a *lagu plaat*, a "record song," for them. This was a traditional song of the type that could be accompanied by *saluang*, though in Taufik's telling there was no *saluang* player. The singer announced that he would sing "side A," and when he had finished he said, "now side B."

⁷ The recording angel did not successfully evade the Muslim prohibition of representations of animate beings, but it was better than a dog.

eminent male singer of the second half of the 1930s, S. Abdullah. HMV's records were pressed at the Calcutta factory.

Beka. Beka sent a recording engineer to DEI in 1926–27 for its first postwar recording tour. Close to 700 sides were recorded, and most were apparently released in a blitz in mid-1927. The label chose to invest heavily in the star system right from the start, focusing on the actress and singer Miss Riboet (“Miss Noisy”). Beka recorded 122 songs by her in that first year and another 66 in later years.⁸ Among Beka's other stars were Aer Laoet (=Herlaut), Toemina, Nji Moersih (a singer of *tembang Sunda*), and Amat (the most-recorded of Beka's male singers). Beka does not seem to have recorded much in M/S. Although from 1931 it was part of the EMI group and could have pressed its records in either the former Gramophone Company factory in Calcutta or the former Columbia factory in Shanghai—now both EMI plants—it pressed its records instead in Germany, as it had done from its first tour to IMS in 1906.

Odeon. Odeon was more attentive to M/S, but it did most of its work in DEI. Their first postwar recordings were issued in late 1927. It does not appear that Odeon did such a long preparatory tour as Beka did, or stockpiled hundreds of recordings, as Beka did. Odeon did not have any stars of the magnitude of S. Abdullah or Miss Riboet, but in the DEI it had second-rank stars like Siti Amsah, Miss Alang, Miss Lee, Nji Resna (*tembang Sunda*), and Nji Iti Narem (singing with Sundanese gamelan), and in M/S it had the prominent ensemble leader Mr. Jahri (=Jaar). Like Beka, Odeon pressed its records in Germany.

Columbia Graphophone Company. Columbia's first new recordings in IMS were made in November 1928 (Copeland 1995: 28). They were pressed in England, and Australian

⁸ Beka got double duty out of Miss Riboet's recordings, many of which were first issued in the late 1920s and then were reissued with a special slogan, “Miss Riboet Records,” in the early 1930s.



Figure 3.1. Two record labels from the late 1920s. Top: a *kroncong* sung by Herlaut (Aer Laoet) with the Beka house orchestra. / Bottom: “After dancing, go home to sleep,” played by the Ambonese Military Flute Orchestra of Batavia. (Odeon label courtesy of Jaap Erkelens.)



Figure 3.2. Cover of a Columbia (U.K.) catalogue, ca. 1930, advertising "newest recordings made in Java." The photograph in the center is of a *wayang orang* performance; the vignettes around the center panel are of Javanese and Sundanese musicians and dancers. See Figure 5.4 for a page from inside this catalogue.

D. E. I.

May 1935.

PERUBAHAN DAN KEMADJUEAN BESAR
DARI PLAAT



(Tjap Andjing)

Opname Tahun 1935

Krontjong

Swarana zangers, zangeressen dan instrument lebih terang, kalm dan gevoel dengan sairan-sairan jang mengandoeng maksoed dan berarti.

PLAAT PLAAT BAROE jang Kaloear dalam ini boelan:

NS. 1	{ Fadjar—Blues, Tjoeatja Terang—Rumba,	S. Abdullah S. Abdullah
NS. 2	{ Oh, Doewit—Rumba, Tandjoeng Kandis—Tango,	Miss Jacoba Miss Jacoba
NS. 3	{ Saia dan Toean—Blues, Sorga Doenia—Rumba,	Miss Eulis Miss Eulis
NS. 4	{ Tjintanja Satoe Iboe—Tango, Taman Boenga Melati—Rumba,	Miss Soepia Miss Soepia
NS. 5	{ Kaoem Boeroeh—Rumba, Termenoeng-menoeng di Tepi Empang—Blues,	Gadjali Gadjali
N. 9284	{ Slamet Tingal Orang Batavia, Stamboul "His Master's Voice,"	Stamboul, Bram Atjeh (Titaley) Stamboul, Bram Atjeh (Titaley)
N. 9285	{ De Bron Der Liefde, Krontjong, Sedih Hati, Stamboul,	Leo Atjeh (Sapulitu) Leo Atjeh (Sapulitu)
N. 9286	{ Stamboul Zwarte Hond, Stamboul, Krontjong Gagak Solo, Krontj. Mr. Hanapi	Miss Brintik (Dari Tandj. Priok)

Figure 3.3. Cover of an HMV catalogue supplement from May 1935, featuring new recordings of *kroncong*. "The voices of the singers, male and female, and the instruments are clearer, more calm and full of feeling, with meaningful lyrics." All songs on NS 1-3 and NS 5 are identified on the labels as *kroncong*, as are the first side of N 9285 and the second side of N 9286. The other sides of N 9285 and N9286 and both sides of N 9284 are *stambul*. The songs on NS 4 are unspecified DEI popular music.

pressings are also found. Columbia concentrated more on DEI than on M/S (in a ratio of about 3:1), and in the DEI it specialized in recordings of Central Javanese court gamelan music and associated genres like *langendriyan* and *wayang orang*. Other companies also recorded this music, but Columbia designed special labels for them (see Figure 1.1.), issued some recordings in the deluxe 12" format, and published expensive six-record sets of *langendriyan* (a dance-drama with sung dialogue)—three episodes, six records each—and another of *Bancak-Dhoyok* (comic dialogues with gamelan interjections, drawn from *wayang orang* theater). The court gamelans and their female singers were in a sense Columbia's biggest stars. Other key artists on the Columbia DEI roster were Nji Iti Narem (a singer with Sundanese gamelan; she recorded for HMV both before and after her stint with Columbia), Nji Moersih (*tembang Sunda*), Siti Aminah (who mainly sang songs in the Melayu repertoire), and the Eurasian composer and orchestra leader Fred Belloni. In M/S, the singer Miss Julie and the ensemble leader A. Rachman were the label's biggest draws.

Electric and Musical Industries (China). EMI was not a label but a conglomerate of labels, owning five of the international labels recording in IMS (HMV, Beka, Odeon, Columbia, and Pathé) and manufacturing in its Calcutta and Shanghai plants the records of several of the "local" labels (Canary, Angsa, and Delima in the DEI; Kuching and Singa in M/S). From December 1938, EMI (China) had a branch office in Singapore, with three directors, R. Degoy, R. L. Read, and H. L. Wilson. Apparently the various labels were divided among them; Wilson was responsible for Columbia.⁹

⁹ In a letter to K. K. Knies, its agent in Surabaya, the Columbia head office in England wrote: "We beg to advise you that the Management has been considering the situation of our business and activities in the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States, Siam and the Dutch East Indies, and has decided, in order to consolidate the various

Polyphon Werke AG and Deutsche Grammophon AG/GmbH. Four IMS labels shared a single management that kept undergoing financial reorganization and changing its corporate name. The British firm Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, located in Hanover, Germany, was founded in 1898 and became a subsidiary of The Gramophone Company soon thereafter. During World War I it was seized by the German government as an enemy asset and sold to Polyphon Musikwerke AG, which thereupon changed its name to Polyphon Werke AG. In 1932 that company reorganized and became Deutsche Grammophon AG, which in 1937 was liquidated and then revived as Deutsche Grammophon GmbH.

Beginning in 1927 and running through until the late 1930s, this shape-shifting company marketed records in IMS under the names Polyphon, Polydor, Pagoda, and Hindenburg.¹⁰ Unlike Beka and Odeon, which were also distinct labels under one company, the Polyphon labels seem to have shared a single vast numbering system, and for lack of more information I consider them all essentially one label, which I arbitrarily call Polyphon unless it is necessary (as here) to distinguish between them. Hindenburg and Polyphon issued a mix of DEI and M/S content, with Polyphon leaning towards M/S. All the Polydor records I know of are DEI. Pagoda was mostly M/S. Hindenburg and Pagoda both produced a considerable number of records aimed at the Straits Chinese market, with label text in Chinese.

activities that we have in this area, to appoint a Branch Office in Singapore which will be operated by Mr. Wilson of The Electric & Musical Industries (China) Ltd. He will take over the control of the above territories as far as Columbia and Marconiphone products are concerned" (copy of a letter in the EMI Archives, dated 2 December 1938). Other letters in the archive show that Wilson conducted correspondence on the letterhead of "Electric & Musical Industries (China) Ltd., Singapore Branch Office."

¹⁰ These records bore a picture of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, the president of Germany from 1925 to 1934. The label name "Hindenburg" appeared in Malay-Arabic script but not in roman. (See Figure 3.4.) For more on the corporate history of Polyphon/Deutsche Grammophon, see Bultmann 1998 or Fetthauer 2000.



Figure 3.4. Hindenburg label, issued 1928. (Courtesy of Du Jun Min.)

Ultraphon. Ultraphon was founded in Berlin in early 1929, with Dutch capital (Elfström & Englund 1968: 2). It seems to have recorded only DEI material, no M/S. It made a specialty (though not an exclusive one) of publishing Sundanese and Cirebonese traditional music, and, curiously, given its Dutch backing, it was one of two labels that dared to publish recordings of the nationalist anthem “Indonesia Raya.” In March 1932 the company failed and was taken over by Telefunken, which continued to issue IMS records with the Ultraphon label for awhile, before switching to the Telefunken label.

Pathé Frères. Although Pathé had a representative in Singapore from ca. 1905 (Kinnear 2003: 251), it does not seem to have recorded Malay-language music there until the late 1930s. It initiated a label called Pathé Cock Brand, with Pathé’s usual rooster logo, but it then retired that series and its English-language label name in favor of the name Pathé Chap Ayam (a direct

Malay translation of the original English name). Pathé Cock Brand issues were first advertised in March 1939, and the earliest advertisements for Pathé Chap Ayam came in September 1940. The content was entirely from M/S, consisting of popular music and Melayu repertoire. Pathé Chap Ayam is one of only three labels that had published in M/S *before* World War II and continued to publish in M/S *after* the war. (The others are HMV and Columbia. None of them publishing for DEI after the war, since the former DEI was engulfed in revolution against the Dutch.)

Edison Bell Radio. The London-based label Edison Bell Radio, active between August 1928 and April 1932 (Badrock 1970), recorded a number of sides by the Krontjong Orchest Eurasia, a band based in Holland and presumably consisting of Eurasian musicians (Nanning 1978, 1979, 1981). These 8" discs were sold mainly in Europe. Edison Bell does not seem to have produced any other IMS discs on its own label, but it did the pressing for the Quek Swee Chiang label in Singapore on a "custom job" basis.

3.3. Companies and labels: IMS

Seven "local" record companies sprang up in the interwar years in the DEI, and at least three in Singapore. None of them survived the Second World War.

Tio Tek Hong Record. Tio Tek Hong (1877-c.1960), a successful Peranakan Chinese importer and retailer in Batavia, was the first to import gramophones and phonographs (and the records and cylinders to play on them) into Batavia. He became the sole Batavia agent for Odeon in the years before World War I, arranging all Batavia recordings for the company and

presumably selecting the artists and repertoire to be recorded. He had a similar arrangement, though not lasting as long, with the Columbia Phonograph Company Gen'l.

After the war, in 1923, he made an attempt to revive the Odeon relationship with six sides of Indonesian popular melodies recorded by the Dajos Béla Orchestra in Berlin and issued in the DEI on Odeon. But this revival was not sustained, and Tio decided to start his own label, Tio Tek Hong Record. The first three issues, advertised in Batavia in March 1924 (along with the first volume of a series of DEI songbooks that eventually reached nine volumes), were the Dajos Béla sides, reissued with Tio Tek Hong's labels, but after that there was a hiatus until December 1925, when Tio Tek Hong issued his initial group of recordings by DEI musicians. Tio also imported and sold sporting goods and guns—all in the same shop with gramophones and records and musical instruments. He was hard hit by the Depression and in 1930 split his business, keeping the guns and athletic equipment but giving the music side to his brother Tio Tek Tjoe.¹¹ The label had probably ceased operations before that: the record bearing the highest number in the Tio Tek Hong series was advertised in January 1928.

His records were mostly devoted to popular songs from the Batavia theater and from troupes from elsewhere who came to Batavia to perform. In a newspaper advertisement inviting singers to audition for recording, he announced that his firm “now has its own machine for making records [*masin sendiri aken bikin plaat*], so it is no longer necessary to spend a lot of money to bring an engineer from the [overseas] factory.” The “machine for making records” was probably equipment for recording, not a record press. Had it been a press, Tio Tek Hong

¹¹ In 1942, with the Netherlands occupied by Germany and the Japanese invasion of DEI looming, the colonial government seized Tio's stock of guns. After that, he writes laconically in his memoir, “I got tired of doing business” (Tio 1959:30, 2006:26).

would presumably have rented its services to other labels, but no records show “made in Indonesia” (or a colonial-era equivalent) until the early 1950s. On the other hand, I have not been able to find out where the records were pressed if not in Batavia. They do not bear the characteristic numbers or typography of either the Gramophone Company’s Calcutta plant or Columbia’s Shanghai plant.

Yo Kim Tjan / Populair. Yo Kim Tjan was another Batavia Peranakan importer and retailer. His retail store was the Toko Populair. When he first advertised his records, in December 1930, his label was called Yokimtjan or Yokimtjan Record, but later, probably in 1935 he changed the name to Populair. Yokimtjan Record and Ultraphon were the only labels to issue recordings of “Indonesia Raya.” Yo Kim Tjan’s records were pressed in England.

Triplex Record. Toko Triplex was a store in Surabaya owned by Koo Siok Ting. The only advertisement I have seen for Triplex Record is from June 1929, but the store was already in the record business, in a way, by November 1928, when a newspaper article appeared saying that boxes of 78s pirated from Odeon, Beka, and Polyphon originals had been seized in Surabaya. The pirated 78s had been manufactured, the article says, in Japan [!] and ordered by Triplex’s owner.¹² I do not know where the legitimate records on the Triplex label were manufactured, nor who recorded them.

Canary Record. In the early and mid-1930s, the Surabaya firm Hoo Soen Hoo had a middleman arrangement with HMV, arranging sessions and doing the A&R work before the HMV engineers came to town. Then, in the late 1930s, Hoo Soen Hoo’s owner, Oei Tjiauw Liong, decided to start his own record label, Canary. His engineer, one Lo Khun Bian, had apparently learned on

¹² *Tjahaja Timoer* [Malang], 5 November 1928.

the job while working with HMV (Hamonic & Salmon 1983). Oei persuaded HMV's biggest star, the singer S. Abdullah, to record for Canary.¹³ Canary pressed most of its discs at the EMI factory in Shanghai, though some bear the legend "made in India," i.e. at the Calcutta factory, also owned by EMI. (A Canary label is shown in Figure 5.7.)

Canary was an adventurous label, recording not only *kroncong* and *tembang Sunda* and the inevitable (for a Surabaya label) *ludruk*, but also music from Banyuwangi (a relatively remote region of East Java) and Makasar (represented on no other label). Its key artists were S. Abdullah, the Sundanese *tembang* singer and comedian Menir Moeda, and Sech Albar, the leader of a Surabaya *gambus* orchestra. The label produced the greatest number of titles of any of the IMS companies, and in a relatively short time—it cannot have begun operations earlier than 1938, and it stopped production, like all the other firms, in 1941 or the earliest days of 1942. (The Japanese arrived in March of that year.) For such a productive and well-distributed label, Canary did surprisingly little newspaper advertising—so little, in fact, that it makes one wonder why other labels went to the expense of advertising, since Canary succeeded so well without it.

Tjap Angsa ("Swan Brand"). *Tjap Angsa* was even more adventurous than Canary. It was the only pre-war label to be based off Java and to specialize in non-Javanese local music. Based in Medan, *Tjap Angsa's* sole focus was music in Sumatra, both Indonesian-language popular music and music in local Sumatran languages and musical idioms. Although most of the international labels were dabbling in Minangkabau and Batak music in the late 1930s, *Angsa*

¹³ It is not clear whether Abdullah broke a contract with HMV to record for Canary. One would think he must have, but both Canary and HMV continued to release recordings of Abdullah until his death in August 1941, and the matrix numbers on the HMV discs are contemporaneous with those of other HMV recordings released at the same time. This suggests that HMV was not simply releasing a backlog of old Abdullah recordings (in which case the numbers would have been lower than those of other recordings made later).

was the first to devote itself entirely to that island. The label was apparently owned jointly by two retailers, Toko Pagi Sore in Medan and Toko Anti-Mahal in Padang and Fort de Kock (now Bukittinggi). The first recording sessions for the label were held in Medan in October 1938, and the first batch of finished records went on sale on 31 December 1938. A newspaper report tells us that the second recording session, in late May or early June 1939, was conducted by two EMI engineers brought from Shanghai.¹⁴ The article does not say who were the engineers for the first session. Possibly the same two people: all the records were pressed at the EMI plant in Shanghai, using Shanghai matrix numbers, which suggests EMI engineers.

Delima. I have not been able to find much information about this label. Kinnear (2003: 465) traces it to Toko Delima in Batavia, but I have never seen anything to make this connection explicit. Delima recorded artists from Batavia and Bandung, and it also recorded a substantial amount of Minangkabau music. It used HMV matrixes, and its records were manufactured at the Gramophone Company factory in Calcutta. The first specific listing of Delima titles is found in an advertisement in a Medan newspaper at the end of November 1938. The prominence of Sumatran music and artists, and the fact that the only advertisements for Delima I have seen are from Sumatra, make me wonder about Kinnear's identification of the label with a Batavia store. Could it instead have been based in Sumatra?

Extra Record. I know even less about Extra Record. Kinnear (ibid.) links it to Toko Extra in Palembang, which is plausible, given that all of its few titles are in the Melayu repertoire and one of them is named for a river in South Sumatra ("Kali Moesi"). Extra Record used HMV

¹⁴ *Soeara 'Oemoem* [Surabaya], 9 June 1939.



Figure 3.5. Two record labels for recordings of traditional Minangkabau songs from West Sumatra. The Angsa recording features vocal accompanied by *puput* (shawm), *saluang* (oblique flute), and *rabab* (bowed lute). The Delima recording features vocal accompanied by *saluang* only.

matrixes, and its records were manufactured at the Calcutta plant in India. It had only a short run of discs, which Kinnear says were recorded in 1941–42.

All of the above were DEI labels. Now we come to the three M/S labels:

Chap Kuching. This “Cat Brand” is perhaps so named as a play on the “Dog Brand” (HMV). It was the label of S. Moutrie & Co., a Singapore importer of musical instruments, gramophones, and records. Moutrie’s head offices were in Shanghai. The label started in 1934, using HMV matrixes and pressing its records at the Gramophone Company factory in India.

Chap Singa (“Lion Brand”). Chap Singa was established in 1937 by M. (for Mabel) E. and T. Hemsley. The latter had been the Singapore manager of Moutrie’s in 1934, when that store started Chap Kuching. Chap Singa, like Chap Kuching, used HMV matrixes and pressed its records at the factory in Calcutta. Kinnear writes: “M.E. and T. Hemsley and Co., Ltd., closed in 1942, and sold off their ‘Chap Singa’ recordings to The Gramophone Co., Ltd., Calcutta, who reissued most of the selections on ‘His Master’s Voice’ in 1945–1946” (2003: 480).

Quek Swee Chiang. This was a Chinese-music label produced by Teck Chiang Long & Co. in Singapore; its discs were manufactured in London by Edison Bell, which is named on the record labels. I have seen only a few discs, all of which say on the label that they are “Hokkien Amoy.” I have seen no advertisements that would date the records, but to me they have the look of the late 1920s. The terminus ante quem would seem to be June 1933, when the Edison Bell factory was sold off (Copeland 1991: 8).

Chapple / Imperial. In IMS, Chapple was a minor label that issued only two discs I know of. These were manufactured in England. One of them was also issued on Imperial, a significant label in other regions but not in IMS.

3.4. *Business practices*

Contracts with agents

In this interwar period, the second contract model described in chapter 2 became the predominant model for the agreements between the European companies and their agents in IMS. Increasingly, the agents determined who and what to record. They paid the expenses of the recording location, and if artists were to be brought in from afar, the agents paid their expenses. The companies, for their part, sent in engineers to make the recordings—on company equipment or on the agent's equipment, as the case might be. The company also paid for manufacturing the records. As there were no pressing facilities in IMS, this was always done in factories abroad.

The agent agreed to purchase a stipulated quantity of the new discs at a favorable discount. If the records were to be published on the European company's label, the company owned the records and could distribute them outside the contractually determined range of the agency's territory, without paying royalties to the agent.

This point became an issue in 1939 between H. L. Wilson, the manager of the Columbia label for EMI's Singapore branch, and the head office in Hayes, England. I reproduce portions of this unpublished correspondence here, in order to convey something of the tone of communications between the branch and the home office, and also for the sake of the details it provides.¹⁵ Wilson wanted Columbia's principal agent in Java, the firm of K. K. Knies in Surabaya, to make recordings for Columbia in Sumatra. (This would have been for Columbia's

¹⁵ This account is based on a letter from Wilson in Singapore to the Export Department of Columbia Graphophone Co., Hayes, 29 August 1939 (copy of typewritten letter in EMI Archives, no number stamp), and the reply from Hayes to Wilson, 28 November 1939.

TP series, which had not yet been launched.)¹⁶ Knies, Wilson writes to Hayes, “were unable to see their way to do this,” so Wilson looked for an agent in Sumatra to do these recordings, and he settled on Toko Pagi Sore, the retailer in Medan that had just started its own label, Tjap Angsa. The deal for Pagi Sore was sweetened by Wilson’s offer of sole distributorship in Sumatra for the records of Javanese music that had been made for Columbia by Knies. (There was a large population of Javanese in North Sumatra who were potential consumers for these records.) But there was a problem: Knies already had an agent for Sumatra. Knies’s practice was to buy the records from Columbia (that is, EMI) at the wholesale price of 1 shilling (British currency) per disc, and then sell them to Pagi Sore for 1/6d (one shilling sixpence, i.e., one and a half shillings).¹⁷ To avoid “upsetting” Knies, Wilson proposed to sell those records to Pagi Sore for that same price of 1/6d but pay the extra sixpence to Knies as a “royalty.”

Wilson knew that this royalty payment went against Columbia’s (that is, EMI’s) policy, so he tried to defend it at the same time that he proposed it:

In regard to Malay records generally, and the terms and conditions under which agents’ own records are supplied and sold, we believe that the question of territorial rights usually applied in these cases should not apply in this particular case. Malay records find a sale only in Dutch East Indies and in Malaya and although the two territories are under different flags, they really form one group and one market. It seems to us that we are taking advantage of the situation if we argue that records made say in Singapore cannot be sold by the agent [*i.e., the agent who arranged for them to be made*] in Java, or vice versa. We can, of course,

¹⁶ “TP” may have stood for Tapanuli, the homeland of the “Batak” groups; but not all recordings in the eventual TP series were of Batak music.

¹⁷ According to the website www.measuringworth.com/datasets/exchange, 1 shilling in 1939 was worth \$0.22 in US dollars, and the Dutch guilder (*f*) was worth \$1.875 USD. Thus the retail price of a Columbia record in 1939, *f*1.85, would have been equivalent to \$0.98 USD. If Columbia/EMI was selling the records to Knies at 1 shilling (\$0.22), it was giving Knies a 77.5% wholesaler’s discount, which seems huge, but perhaps it was a special price on the records that Knies had itself commissioned, not the going price for all Columbia records. For comparison, a 1925 letter from F.W.J.B. Wortman to The Gramophone Company Ltd states that he gave agents a smaller discount: 56-1/3% plus 1% for cash payment and another 1% as an advertising allowance (Wortman to Hayes, 9 January 1925; typed letter in EMI Archives, number-stamped 5308).

take this stand, but it appears to be quite unfair in the circumstances, and with a view to encouraging agents to take further recordings, we have agreed to supply their various records to our agents in other territories, and to credit them with agreed royalties.

We would point out that if we refuse this concession to those of our agents with recordings under our own trademarks, such as Columbia, Pathe, etc. they are at a distinct disadvantage with agents who have private recordings under their own trademarks, of which as a matter of fact there are now several, who are able to distribute their records as they please.

Wilson's arguments carried no weight with headquarters. The Joint General Manager (unnamed in the letter) replied:

An agent must record for his own market in the full knowledge that his recordings sold in territories outside of his representation are our exclusive property and can be used without reference or payment to him. The Robinson Piano Company [*this appears to be a reference to a different case, but perhaps Hayes was confused and forgot that Knies was the agent in question*] are fully aware of this fact; in fact, all the agents are, although I admit it is nothing new for them to try and "cash in" on their recordings sold in other markets. This has been refused in the past, and you must refuse it in the future; in other words, you will probably see now how your arrangement with the R.P.C. cuts right across the very principles upon which we have built our record business.

The above correspondence is concerned with the case of agents' rights over records issued on the European company's label. When the recordings were manufactured as "custom jobs" by the European company and published on the agent's own label—as were Tjap Angsa's and Canary's records (pressed at the Columbia/EMI factory in Shanghai), or Chap Kuching's, Chap Singa's, Delima's, and Extra's (pressed at the Gramophone Company/EMI factory in Calcutta)—the agent owned the records, as Wilson observed. The agent had to pay for the recording engineers and the pressing, and had also to buy a stipulated quantity of discs from the factory.

Contracts with artists

It became common in the interwar years for recording companies to make contracts with their favored artists. This practice seems to be new in the second phase of recording: I have seen no indication of it before World War I. It is, I think, a mark of the new respect with which the companies viewed the IMS market.

Knies reported to the Columbia head office in June 1938 that it had the following artists on a “yearly guarantee”:¹⁸

- H. Dumas, the leader of two very popular orchestras, Lief Java (which played mostly *kroncong*) and The Sweet Java Islanders (a Hawaiian band);
- three *pesindhen* (female singers in Javanese gamelan music): Njai Demang Mardoeraras (also known as Djaikem), Bok Bekel Mardoelaras (Soerattinah), and M. A. Worolaksmi;
- and the male *kroncong* singers Parmin, Soekarno, and Soeparto.

Knies also had a number of artists on “royalty contracts”:

- Machmoed Shawqi Alajoebi and Awab al-Bargie (Assjah Alhadrami), reciters of the Qur’an
- Achmad (Botol Kosong), a comedian
- S. H. Alidroes, a singer of Barzanji and qasidah in Arabic
- F. H. Belloni, a Eurasian composer and ensemble leader
- Miss Annie Landouw, Louis Koch, and Miss E. Cottrell (Miss Editt), *kroncong* singers
- Miss Dewe – unidentified, probably a *kroncong* singer
- Eduard Fritsch - unidentified
- Miss J. Luntungan – singer with a Hawaiian group
- Miss C. Lucardie – a singer with the P.M.Y. Jazz Orchestra, specializing in songs with lyrics in European languages
- S. Mohamad Aleydroes – director of an *orkes harmonium*
- S. Mohamad bin Jitrip – director of an *orkes gambus*
- Mohamad Jasin All Djawi – a singer with an *orkes gambus*
- Miss Roekiah – a singer (popular music) and film star
- Hawaiian Orchestra The Silver Strings

¹⁸ Typewritten letter from K. K. Knies (Surabaya) to The Columbia Graphophone Com. Ltd., Calcutta, 6 June 1938, in EMI Archives, number-stamped 84127.

- H.E.L.W.E. de Sizo – shown on records as De Sizo’s String Orchestra
- Miss J. van Salk – singer with De Sizo’s String Orchestra

And Knies noted that “the contracts of the following artists expired on June 6th 1938 and were not renewed”:

- H. v. d. Brink (Harry King) – singer (popular music)
- John Iseger – singer (popular music)
- Miss J. Versteeg (Miss Ninja) – singer with The Sweet Java Islanders

An advertisement in a Padang newspaper in 1931 listed a number of *kroncong* and popular-music singers “who sing only for Beka” (i.e. were on contracts forbidding them to record for other labels. Most of these names have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter:¹⁹

- Herlaut (=Aer Laoet)
- Toemina
- Amat
- Paulus Itam
- Moenah
- Miss Riboet.

The immensely popular singer S. Abdullah was under an exclusive contract to HMV, renewed yearly from 1929 until 1938, when he went to Canary.²⁰ In 1932 there was a lapse: his HMV contract for that year had finished and had not yet been renewed, so he recorded for Odeon under a pseudonym (Sahib Radja). HMV sued Odeon, but eventually they settled the matter and Abdullah returned to HMV. In 1937 he was in Batavia, recording 42 songs to fulfill that year’s contract; he expected it would take him roughly two months. An interviewer noted

¹⁹ Beka advertisement in *Radio* [Padang], 8 May 1931.

²⁰ Although, as I mentioned above, there is the possibility that he remained on some sort of contract with HMV even after recording for Canary, since HMV and Canary both issued new recordings by Abdullah after 1938.

that HMV had reserved an entire floor of a hotel for Abdullah, with rehearsal space as well as living and sleeping quarters (Bajasut 1937).

The monetary terms of these contracts are rarely specified in the sources I have seen. The *kroncong* singer Annie Landouw claimed in a 1939 interview that as a young singer she had been offered a Beka contract for *f*3000, with a monthly salary of *f*75 and a bonus of *f*25 for every song that was recorded. But these terms don't make sense—*f*3000 (a huge sum) *plus f*900 a year salary *plus* recording bonuses? Another article mentions a three-year Beka contract that she signed in 1927; this is probably the same contract she referred to, and *f*3000 may have been the actual total of three years at *f*900, plus 12 recordings (*Pewarta Soerabaia* 1939; Leeuwen 1985).

I have seen one actual contract, or rather two preparatory versions of one, a document held in the library of the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta. The parties to the contract are the Columbia Graphophone Company and an official of the palace, Mas Darmoro Soerjodarmodjo, who is contracting with Columbia in the name of the *pesindhen* or *hofzangeres* (“female singer of the court”) Njai Ronggo Mardoeraras (Djaikem). The contract also applies to other singers, male and female, who would sing in the part of the sessions devoted to *langendriyan*: Samsikin, Jati, and Sadikem. The year of the contract is nearly illegible, but it is most likely 1932.²¹ It was for one year, renewable three months before expiration if the singer was willing.

²¹ Other possibilities are the other years when Columbia recorded the Mangkunegaran musicians—1934, 1935, and 1937. But 1937 is excluded because the contract concerns the singer Njai Ronggo Mardoeraras (Djaikem), and by 1937 she had gone up a rank in her court title: she was no longer Njai Ronggo but Njai Demang.

The contract stipulates that Darmoro will provide the gamelan and the recording space. A maximum of 60 *gendhing* (separate pieces) may be demanded by the company. Singers have to be willing to sing a given piece repeatedly until the recording is satisfactory. Columbia has the right to sell the records worldwide. For the duration of the contract, Njai Ronggo Mardoeraras may not record for any other company, whether under her real name or a pseudonym, and she may not give assistance to another recording company. Columbia tried to put in a clause saying that Mardoeraras would never record the same pieces for any other company, even after the contract was finished, but this clause was struck out.

Mardoeraras was to receive an honorarium of f1000 for one year, and she would receive another f10-15 for each piece recorded. The gamelan musicians (and the other *langendriyan* singers? they were named early on but are never mentioned again) would receive “as usual” f50 for each day of recording. If Mardoeraras violated the terms of the contract she would be fined f1500, and she would still have to fulfill the contract unless Columbia canceled the contract altogether.

3.5. *The recordings*

Again, as in chapter 2, I provide a table (Table 3.1) giving my estimate of the total production of records for IMS, this time for the second phase of recording, 1920–42. The discographical details and calculations can be found in Yampolsky 2011a.²² In Tables 3.2 and 3.3 I offer a

²² The totals in the DEI and combined DEI/IMS columns of Table 3.1 are 68 sides lower than the corresponding figures published in Yampolsky 2011a. I have determined that the German label Homocord, which produced an estimated 54 sides in the 1920s, was reissuing pre-war Anker recordings, not making new ones. I included Homocord in the DEI count for Yampolsky 2011a but I have removed it here. The Tio Tek Hong 5500 series also

summary breakdown of all the recordings by genre or category, and more detailed versions of these breakdowns are given in Tables 3.6 and 3.7, in the appendix to this chapter.

A comparison of Tables 3.2 and 3.3 here with the comparable tables in chapter 2 shows overall changes in the market between the first and second phases of recording. In both M/S and DEI, the popular music share has gone up significantly: it is 12 percentage points higher in DEI and 18 points higher in M/S. Peranakan Chinese music has declined 20 points in both M/S and DEI. Records aimed at the Muslim market have declined by several points in M/S but risen a little in DEI, while the opposite pattern has occurred with gambus and harmonium. As for exclusively DEI musics: Central Javanese music has risen 6 points, West Javanese music has stayed where it was, and Balinese and Minang music are new categories in the second phase.

Finally, Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show the popular music category in more detail. Hawaiian music and regional popular music, which were not on the charts in the first phase, have emerged as significant genres. But the big story, to which I return in chapter 5, is the sharp rise in prominence of *kroncong*. Although in Table 3.5 it seems to be running neck-and-neck with “unspecified” popular music, the latter is a residual, catch-all category, without a marketing name—covering everything from the Eurasian composer-arranger Fred Belloni’s “Old Indies Melody” (sung by “Two Indies Maidens”) to “It’s a Sin to Tell a Lie” and Miss Iem’s “Tango-Rumba” (helpfully characterized on the label as a “Rumba-Tango”)—while *kroncong* is a named, unified genre with a single harmonic-melodic structure. In the second phase of recording it becomes the single most prominent genre of popular music in the DEI, and, as I have argued

turns out to consist of reissues of earlier Tio Tek Hong recordings, so I have removed the 14 sides estimated for that series from the count.

already, it achieves this position by conforming to the ideals and aspirations of DEI's growing consumer class.

	DEI	M/S	TOTAL
<i>European companies</i>			
HMV (=Gramophone Company)	3315	3422	6737
Beka	2478	378	2856
Odeon	2442	1480	3922
Columbia (UK)	2184	676	2860
Polyphon/Polydor/Pagoda	156	348	504
Pathé		250	250
Ultraphon	150		150
Edison Bell	40		40
Total European companies	10765	6554	17319
<i>IMS companies</i>			
Tio Tek Hong	138		138
Yokimtjan/Populair	308		308
Triplex	252		252
Tjap Angsa	418		418
Delima	246		246
Canary	730		730
Extra	18		18
Quek Swee Chiang		16	16
Chap Kuching		298	298
Chap Singa		376	376
Chapple		4	4
Total IMS Companies	2110	694	2804
TOTAL	12875	7248	20123

Table 3.1. Estimate of total number of unique recordings (sides) produced for IMS, 1920–42.

M/S KNOWN RECORDINGS	European labels	% total European labels	M/S labels	% total M/S labels	TOTAL	% of total M/S
M/S popular music (<i>Melayu repertoire & undifferentiated popular music</i>)	2592	65.92	299	84.23	2891	67.44
Chinese music & theater (<i>Teochew, Cantonese, Amoy, etc.</i>) / Straits Chinese music (<i>dondang sayang in Malay; instrumental patim & wedding music</i>)	475	12.08	5	1.41	480	11.20
Qur'anic recitation & Muslim devotional singing (<i>mainly in Arabic: adzan, dikir, Barzanji</i>) / Arabic secular music (<i>mawwal, qasidah, maqam</i>)	356	9.05	6	1.69	362	8.44
Gambus & harmonium (<i>gambus solo & gambus or harmonium ensembles, with singing in Malay or Arabic</i>)	138	3.51	10	2.82	148	3.45
Miscellaneous	371	9.44	35	9.86	406	9.47
TOTAL	3932	100.00	355	100.01	4287	100.00

Table 3.2. Summary of M/S known recordings (sides), all labels, 1920–42.

DEI KNOWN RECORDINGS	European labels	% total European labels	DEI labels	% total DEI labels	TOTAL	% of total
DEI popular music (<i>kroncong, stambul, Hawaiian, jazz, military, nationalist, regional, Melayu repertoire, & undifferentiated popular music</i>)	3421	40.39	643	51.77	4064	41.85
Peranakan Chinese music & narrative (<i>gambang kromong, patim, gambang rancak, yang kim, theater, unclassified</i>)	159	1.88	2	0.16	161	1.66
Central & East Javanese music & theater (<i>gamelan, wayang orang, kethoprak, ludruk, langendriyan, santiswaran, kentrung, Bancak Dhoyok, sandur, pronoasmoro, siteran</i>)	2571	30.35	80	6.44	2651	27.30
West Javanese music & theater (<i>Sundanese gamelan, kacapi ensembles, Sundanese wayang golek & wayang orang, reog & ogel, ketuk tilu, angklung, penca, degung, longser, pantun Sunda, tarawangsa, Sundanese music on European instruments, Cirebonese gamelan, unclassified</i>)	1381	16.30	239	19.24	1620	16.68
Malay-language theater (<i>stambul & topeng scenes, comic routines</i>)	126	1.49	56	4.51	182	1.87
Qur'anic recitation, Muslim sermons & devotional singing (<i>mainly in Arabic: adzan, dikir, Barzanji</i>) / Arabic secular music (<i>mawwal, qasidah, maqam, dawr, taqtuqa</i>)	333	3.93	111	8.94	444	4.57
Gambus & harmonium (<i>gambus solo & gambus or harmonium ensembles, with singing in Malay or Arabic</i>)	184	2.17	37	2.98	221	2.28
Minangkabau (<i>saluang jo dendang, rabab, randai, kaba, gambus Minang</i>)	105	1.24	66	5.31	171	1.76
Bali & Lombok	133	1.57	–	–	133	1.37
Miscellaneous (<i>Indian music, European light classical, Christian music</i>)	57	0.67	8	0.64	65	0.67
TOTAL	8470	99.99	1242	99.99	9712	100.01

Table 3.3. Summary of DEI known recordings (sides), all labels, 1920–42.

M/S POPULAR MUSIC (MSPM)		% of MSPM
1. M/S popular music (unspecified)	1606	55.55
2. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	738	25.53
3. Kroncong	378	13.08
4. Stambul	45	1.56
5. Kembang Kacang	2	<0.00
6. Hawaiian	30	1.04
7. Jazz accompaniment	3	0.10
8. DEI popular music issued in M/S		
a. Malay language	14	0.48
b. DEI Regional languages (Acehnese, Toba, Ambon, Bawean)	75	2.59
TOTAL	2891	99.93

Table 3.4. *M/S popular music category, 1920–42 (known recordings), with tentative indication of Melayu repertoire.*

DEI POPULAR MUSIC (IPM)		% of IPM
1. DEI popular music (unspecified)	1414	34.79
2. Kroncong	1424	35.04
3. Stambul	226	5.56
4. Hawaiian	261	6.42
5. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	206	5.07
6. Jazz accompaniment	98	2.41
7. Kembang Kacang	14	0.34
8. Military	2	<0.00
9. Nationalist	18	0.44
10. Popular music DEI regional languages (Manado, Javanese, Sundanese, Ambon, Sangir, Batak, Banjar, Aceh, Bugis, Makasar)	374	9.20
11. M/S popular music issued in DEI	27	0.67
TOTAL	4064	99.94

Table 3.5. *DEI popular music category, 1920–42 (known recordings), with tentative indication of Melayu repertoire.*

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

Table 3.6. Detailed Genre Table, known recordings (sides), 1920–42 – M/S

Table 3.7. Detailed Genre Table, known recordings (sides), 1920–42 – DEI

Table 3.6. *Detailed Genre Table for M/S, known recordings (sides), 1920–42.*
Elaborated version of Table 3.2 in the body of the chapter.

DETAILED GENRE TABLE 1920–42: M/S	HMV	Beka	Odeon	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon group	Pathé	Ku-ching	Singa	TOTAL
A. M/S Popular music (MSPM)									
1. M/S popular music (unspecified)	971	13	118	191	115	89	29	80	1606
2. Kroncong	185		15	59	20	22	19	58	378
3. Stambul	22	1	3	7	7		2	3	45
4. Kembang Kacang	1			1					2
5. Hawaiian									
a. European & Hawaiian language	10				1				11
b. Malay	10			2				2	14
c. Unidentified language				1		4			5
6. Jazz accompaniment	3								3
7. DEI popular music issued in M/S									
a. Malay	14								14
b. Acehnese	12								12
c. Batak Toba									
1. Batak Toba popular	44							1	45
2. Andung	2								2
3. Hawaiian	5								5
d. Ambon	3							2	5
e. Bawean	6								6
8. Melayu repertoire (tentative)	406	2	44	50	107	26	43	60	738
B. Muslim religious & other Arabic									
1. Qur'an	46		6		9				61
2. Adzan	2		1		2				5
3. Barzanji	6		9		6				21

	HMV	Beka	Odeon	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon group	Pathé	Ku-ching	Singa	TOTAL
4. Other religious	11		4		4				19
5. Qasidah	25		5	2	13				45
6. Majrur	8		3		12				23
7. Nagam	4								4
8. Arabic (unspecified)	84		26	2	7		1	5	125
9. Arabic?	1				2				3
10. Mawwal	17								17
11. Dor (=dawr)	5		6						11
12. Maqam			4		2				6
13. Taqtuqa	4								4
a. Arabic	1								1
b. Malay	3								3
14. Dakwah/Khotbah	3				3				6
15. Zapin	8								8
C. Gambus & Harmonium									
1. Malay language	80		5	2	22	6	1	9	125
2. Arabic language	17		2			3			22
3. Unclassified				1					1
E. Malay & Straits Chinese									
1. Dondang Sayang	30		1	2	18	6	2	3	62
3. Wedding music			2						2
4. Immigrant groups									
a. Teochew (Chaozhou)	110		91						201
b. Cantonese					2				2
c. Amoy	2		18						20
d. Hainan			2						2
e. Hailam					1				1

	HMV	Beka	Odeon	Col. (UK)	Poly- phon group	Pathé	Ku- ching	Singa	TOTAL
f. Unspecified	6	124	18		41				189
5. Popular music with Chinese topics					1				1
F. Minangkabau - Lagu Minang	12								12
G. Miscellaneous									
1. Indian music	16		18	2	2			4	42
2. Bangsawan theater	213	2		3	5		12	16	251
3. Unclassified theater (Malay lang)	48	2		12	9	2	1	1	75
4. Children's songs	2								2
5. Military	1			2					3
6. Christian									
a. Christian (undifferentiated)	2								2
b. Batak Toba	4								4
7. European light classical & art song	2								2
8. Siamese			4						4
9. Melayu (ethnic group) theater									
a. Makyong			2						2
b. Boria	3		1	1	1				6
c. Mendu							1		1
TOTAL M/S	2470	144	408	340	412	158	111	244	4287

Table 3.7. *Detailed Genre Table for DEI, known recordings (sides), 1920–42.*
Elaborated version of Table 3.3 in the body of the chapter.

DETAILED GENRE TABLE 1920–42: DEI	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi-son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang-sa	Deli-ma	Ca-nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
G. DEI Popular Music (IPM)														
1. DEI popular music (unclassified)	462	286	200	174	26	13	14	44	45	24	17	96	13	1414
2. Kroncong	790	155	164	103	54	3	5	21	21	17	7	82	2	1424
3. Stambul	58	45	59	27	11		2	5	9	1		8	1	226
4. Kembang Kacang	3	6	1	1				1	1		1			14
5. Hawaiian														
a. European & Hawaiian langs	109		16	27					2	2		3		159
b. Malay	48		7	11				8	4	1	8			87
c. Instrumental	2													2
d. Unassigned language	2		2	8					1					13
6. Jazz accompaniment	16	54	11	10					7					98
7. Military	2													2
8. Nationalist	1		6			2			5	4				18
9. Popular music in DEI regional langs														
a. Manado	6	33		2										41
b. Javanese on Western instrs	2	20			1			1						24
c. Sundanese	2													2
d. Ambon														
a. Ambon (unclassified)	29		15	3		2	9			2				60
b. Ambon military	16		4	14										34
c. Ambon Hawaiian	32	2			12									46
e. Sangir Talaud	1													1
f. Batak groups														
1. Toba														

	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi-son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang-sa	Delima	Ca-nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
a. Popular	5	6	16							2				29
c. Hawaiian			4	1										5
2. Karo		4	2							14				20
3. Angkola			6							6				12
4. Sipirok			9	8						6				23
5. Simalungun			8	2										10
6. Maninggoring (?)										8				8
7. Unspecified			5							22				27
g. Banjarmasin	1													1
h. Aceh		4	4	2						14				24
j. Bugis/Makasar												6		6
k. Minang popular	1													1
10. M/S popular music in DEI			10					15					2	27
11. Melayu repertoire (tentative)														
a. Melayu music	59	32	16	8	1			6	1	59		1	2	185
b. Melayu (fr Sibolga/Barus)			2	4						6				12
c. Melayu Minang										9				9
H. Malay-language theater														
1. Stambul theater	3	10	1					10	1	4				29
2. Topeng theater	10	6	2						24					42
3. Music for Topeng theater	2	4												6
4. Unclassified theater (Malay lang)	81		7						3	6	4	4		105
I. Muslim religious & other Arabic														
1. Qur'an	55	18	24	15					10			2		124
2. Adzan	3	1	1											5
3. Dikir	2		1											3
4. Barzanji	3	2	1	1		1		4						12

	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi-son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang-sa	Delima	Ca-nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
5. Other religious	1	8		1		3		2	2	1				18
6. Qasidah	16	31	5	13				2	4		1			72
7. Majrur		2						1						3
8. Nagam	1													1
9. Arabic (unclassified)	40	14	29	2						6	4	35		130
10. Arabic?	1													1
11. Mawwal	1		1					4						6
12. Dor (=dawr)	2	1	2					1			1			7
13. Maqam		1								1				2
14. Taqtuqa														
a. Arabic	11													11
b. Malay	2													2
15. Dakwah/Khotbah	11		6							17	10			44
16. Zapin												1		1
17. Religious?										2				2
J. Gambus & Harmonium														
1. Malay language	19	3	9	34		2		2		5	5		2	81
2. Arabic language	32	12	40	30					3	17	2			136
3. Unclassified gambus/harmonium	1			2				1						4
K. Peranakan (DEI) Chinese														
1. Gambang Kromong	9	42	18	4							2			75
2. Narrative w Gambang Kromong	8													8
3. Unclassified Peran. music (Chinese)	2													2
4. Unclassified Peran. music (Malay)	4													4
5. Patim / Patim + Gambang	6	18												24
6. Yang Kim / Yang Kim + Gambang	9	22												31
7. Peranakan theater (Malay)				8										8

	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi-son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang-sa	Deli-ma	Ca-nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
8. Kembang Kacang on Chinese instrs	2	2												4
9. Popular music with Chinese topics	1	4												5
L. West Javanese music & theater														
1. Sundanese gamelan	89	32	52	43		10			8			8		242
2. Kacapi ensembles	281	117	169	115		37			16		26	139		900
3. Wayang Golek	6		32	36		12						8		94
4. Wayang Orang thtr (Sundanese)	16	20		2										38
5. Wayang Orang music (Sundanese)		14												14
6. Reog & Ogel	20	4	10	9										43
7. Celempung			7	10		2								19
8. Ketuk Tilu			2	10										12
9. Angklung		6		9										15
10. Penca		4		20										24
11. Unclassified Sundanese music	6	9	11	20		8			1		8			63
12. Unclassified Sundanese Theater	20		6	12		4			6			9		57
13. Cirebonese gamelan						5								5
14. Degung	10	6	28	4		7		1						56
15. Longser	10													10
16. Pantun Sunda			6											6
17. Tarawangsa				6										6
18. Sundanese on Western instrs								9						9
19. Kacapi ensembles ?	2	3		2										7
M. Central & East Javanese														
1. Central Javanese gamelan	164	344	213	230	8	2			12					973
2. East Javanese gamelan		37	12											49
3. Wayang Orang theater (Javanese)	190	174	88	188	12									652
4. Wayang Orang music (Javanese)	40	55		16										111

	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly-phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi-son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang-sa	Delima	Ca-nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
5. Santiswara	14			6										20
6. Kentrung & Gurit		6												6
7. Bancak Dhoyok	12	16		12										40
8. Unclassified Javanese gamelan	8	1												9
9. Unclassified Javanese theater	13	1												14
10. Banyuwangi	8											10		18
11. Kethoprak theater	116	68	90	86	18							14		392
12. Kethoprak music	21	42	5	4	2									74
13. Ludruk theater	24	17	8	26								4	2	81
14. Ludruk music	14	19	6	6								2	2	49
15. Sandur	4	14												18
16. Pronoasmoro	16													16
17. Central Javanese siteran		2	7											9
18. Central Jav. music - kacapi ens				10										10
19. Langendriyan		12		60										72
20. Wayang Orang fr North Sumatra				4										4
21, Ludruk from North Sumatra										34				34
N. Minangkabau														
1. Lagu Minang (saluang, rebab, etc.)	37	4	49	2						45	8			145
2. Randai		4												4
3. Gambus (Minangkabau language)			5											5
4. Kaba			4											4
5. Unclassified										5	8			13
O. Bali														
1. Bali		111	17											128
2. Lombok		5												5

	HMV	Beka	Odn.	Col. (UK)	Poly- phon grp.	Ultr.	Edi- son Bell	Tio Tek Hong	YKTj & Pplr	Ang- sa	Deli- ma	Ca- nary	Triplx & Extra	TOTAL
P. Miscellaneous														
1. Indian music		9	1	1								2		13
2. European light classical & art song	2	14												16
3. Christian														
a. Unclassified	8			8								2		18
b. Batak Christian										4				4
c. Ambon/Manado Christian	3	10		1										14
TOTAL DEI	3139	2028	1542	1473	145	113	30	138	186	344	112	436	26	9712

CHAPTER 4

MUSIC ON DUTCH EAST INDIES RADIO IN 1938: REPRESENTATIONS OF UNITY, DISUNITY, AND THE MODERN

The period in which increasing integration was to have come about [as proponents of “Indisch nationalism” or “Indisch citizenship” hoped]—the first half of [the 20th] century—instead witnessed a rapidly increasing segmentation of colonial society. (Jacques van Doorn, 1983:6)

They were like two planets moving along their own orbits, in a very confined universe. If merely to stay on track, it was logical and imperative that each of them, the Eastern as much as the European radio, work strenuously on building up and shielding their own wholeness or, at least, the appearance of it. (Rudolf Mrázek 2002:184)

Mangkunegara’s broadcasts of his palace musicians [on the Solosche Radiovereeniging station, SRV] . . . brought “palace art” to any listeners with access to a receiver, at a time where other princely houses—particularly in Yogyakarta—were also “democratizing” their arts by making them available outside the palace. Live broadcasting added another dimension, though, by at once localizing something modern and modernizing something local. Mangkunegara VII’s broadcast of live gamelan music was a totally modern act. (Jennifer Lindsay, 1997:108)

This chapter is an initial report on a project I began years ago as a complement to my research on gramophone recording in Indonesia in the late-colonial era. The purpose of the gramophone research is to learn about the musical life of the Dutch East Indies (DEI) in that era—with respect both to the musical features of the various genres and to how music functioned in society, what it meant to people to perform it or listen to it or buy records of it.

First presented at an international workshop on “Popular music in twentieth-century Southeast Asia,” sponsored by the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde and held in Jakarta, 10-11 January 2011. A revision of the workshop presentation will be published in *Sonic Modernities in the Malay World*. ed. Bart Barendregt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, forthcoming). The version here is a further revision, including tables and song texts.

This complementary research on radio broadcasting reveals a side of things we cannot see from studying the record industry.

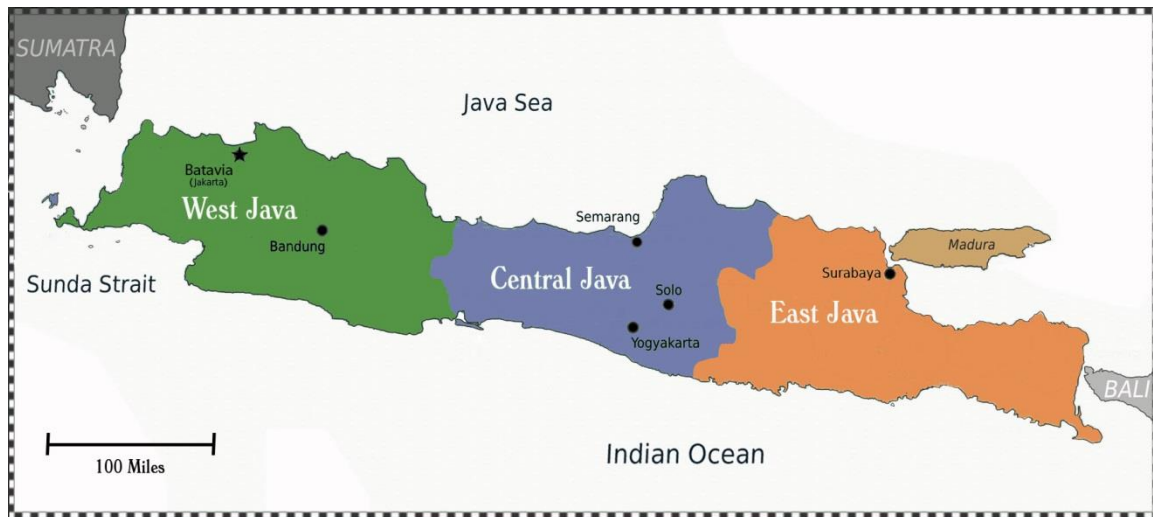


Figure 4.1. Map showing the locations of the principal radio stations on Java before 1942.

Radio was more strongly conditioned by its physical location than were records. To make new records, a recording company could send its engineers on tour to cities across Java,¹ and if it wanted to record musicians who did not live along the tour's route, those performers could be brought to the engineers. For radio, however, it was too expensive and impractical to bring musicians to the cities from afar, especially for repeated broadcasts; instead, radio stations were largely dependent for live broadcasting on local musicians, or on broadcasts relayed from other stations in other cities.

On the other hand, radio was more flexible than the gramophone industry in exploring new talent. A gramophone recording represented a considerable investment in artists' fees,

¹ Nearly all recording in the DEI was done in Java, with the exception of the Odeon/Beka tours to Bali in 1928 and 1929 and some recording in West and North Sumatra in the second half of the 1930s.

engineers' fees, shipment of master recordings abroad for manufacture, and actual production costs, plus shipment of the finished records back to the DEI for sale and distribution to retail outlets. For this reason, recording companies, though they had a constant need for new product, were cautious in recording untried performers. Radio, however, could afford to give unknowns a chance, and in order to develop new talent stations solicited and attended to audience input. For example, *Soeara Nirom*, the program guide for the government-controlled NIROM network's Oostersche ("Eastern") Programma, stated in November 1937 that "many of our Arab listeners in Surabaya" had requested that a certain *gambus* group, the Gamboes Orkest Alhambra, perform on air, and accordingly NIROM would give the group a trial broadcast (*pertjobaän*) on 18 November 1937. Then in February 1938 the guide announced that audience reaction to the trial broadcast had been good, so now Alhambra would be broadcast regularly. In October 1939, the same publication reported that in response to the trial broadcast of another *gambus* group (Gamboes Orkest Assoffa), NIROM had been inundated with letters and reports from all corners of the colony.² It cost the radio station virtually nothing to do a *proefuitzending* (trial broadcast); performers would have been happy for the opportunity to go on the air, and if a new group was a failure it simply was not invited back.

Thus research into radio broadcasting uncovers musicians who did not make it onto record, and it situates music in a localized and day-to-day temporal context as gramophone records cannot. Those are the concerns of the first part of this chapter: what radio research can tell us about Indonesian music near the end of the colonial era. But this research also

² *Soeara Nirom* 1937e, 1938b, 1939d. More on letters to NIROM: at the beginning of 1937, *Soeara Nirom* said it was receiving "statements of satisfaction with our broadcasting"—100 letters and postcards a month—from all over: Palembang, Balikpapan, Medan, Malang, Payakumbuh, Manado. And in November 1939 NIROM announced a new policy, to give five minutes of airtime every day to letters from listeners. Only letters of general interest would be answered on air; others would be replied to by letter "as usual" (*Soeara Nirom* 1937b, 1939f).

allows us to consider the position of radio and radio music in the great issues that were in the air in the 1930s: modernity, nationalism, the relations between colonizer and colonized, and the development of an Indonesian (rather than narrowly ethnic, local, or religious) consciousness. Radio's relation to these issues is the focus of the second part of the chapter.

4.1. *On the air*

Both record and radio research are shaped (one could say deformed) by the fact that they must be for the most part indirect. Some collections of records exist, but I estimate that no more than 30% of the gramophone records produced for the DEI before 1942 can be found in collections, and those collections are scattered around the world. Even so, record researchers are better off than those who work on radio: broadcasts were in those days wholly ephemeral, and there is no retrieving them today. Studying both radio and gramophone records, then, requires us to work with secondary sources: catalogues and advertisements for records, program guides for broadcasts. And program guides are even harder to find than records. That is why this chapter focuses on 1938—not because that year was particularly momentous, but because it is the year for which I could find complete runs of program guides for the largest number of stations.

Live vs. recorded music

In this chapter I map the live music broadcast on five radio stations for the twelve months of 1938. Live music on a sixth station is summarized but not tabulated.³ First, though, a defining question needs an answer: why *live* music?

Radio discourse in the 1930s assumes that listeners prefer live music to gramophone records. An increase in the amount of live broadcasting is always touted by the radio stations as an improvement. A station in Surakarta (Solo), a few days after it begins broadcasting, assures its listeners,

[With a subsidy from the government-sponsored radio network, NIROM] we shall be able to improve [*memperbaiki*] our programme by adding live music [*menambah levende muziek*]. Not only twice a week, but maybe three or four times a week or even every day we can send out *klenengan* [gamelan music], alternating with [other genres of music and theater accompanied by music, such as] *kroncong* and *kethoprak*, *wayang orang*, etc. (Darmo-Kondo 1934b).

A station in Batavia says,

“The board always thinks about and works toward increasing the ratio of true broadcasting to broadcasting of gramophone records,”⁴

and a year later the same station announces with pride that it now airs live programs every day (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1937c). The government network, at the start of its fourth year of operation, says that a reorganization will allow it to “improve our programming, increasing live broadcasting by more than 50%” (*Soeara Nirom* 1937a); and four years after that, looking back over seven years of broadcasting, it observes:

³ Technically this sixth was not a station but a programme, the Westersche Programma, of the same broadcasting network (NIROM) that produced two other programmes, the Oostersche Programma for West Java and a different Oostersche Programma for Central and East Java). Since all three NIROM programmes had different content, it is convenient to treat them as separate stations. I should explain a convention I follow in this chapter: I use *programme* (or its Dutch equivalent, *programma*) for an overall broadcasting design or structure, such as the Western and Eastern programmes of NIROM (or the BBC’s Third Programme), and *program* for an individual broadcast, such as a *kroncong* group’s program on such-and-such a date. We could consider a station’s published *program guide* to be a guide to the overall programme, but in fact it was used to tell listeners what programs would be broadcast when, so I call it a *program guide* rather than a *programme guide*.

⁴ “Senantiasa memikir-mikirkan dan mengoesahkan akan membesarkan penjiaran sebetoelnja ditimbang dengan penjiaran plaat-plaat gramaphoon” (*VORO Jubileum-nummer* 1936:9).

At the start we had to rely on music from gramophone records, but little by little we reached the point where records were only used to fill up the time between two live broadcasts, of which there are now very many. So the situation is reversed, and live broadcasting is now the mainstay of our programme.⁵

In 1941, after the government has ceded control of broadcasting to “Eastern” audiences to a federation of private (i.e. non-government) stations, a newspaper article criticizes the new regime with a long list of complaints, including:

Sometimes the schedule for one night—indeed, often for two nights in a row—has no live *kroncong* or gamelan music, even though these two kinds of music are the centerpieces of the broadcasting programme. They ought to be in the schedule every night (*Pewartar Soerabaia* 1941a).

Nevertheless, radio needed gramophone records. In an essay written at the beginning of official broadcasting, K. W. L. Bezemer, the General Director for Broadcasting at NIROM, the government-approved network, wrote that “although the public generally expresses a preference for live performance,” when it comes to “what the English call ‘high-brow’ music” (he uses the English term), NIROM must depend on records, because there are not enough skilled performers of European classical music in the DEI (*N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1934a). (Besides, he continues, with new technological advances in recording, recordings sound as good as live music, and when we start receiving here the new automatic record changers from Europe, which allow a long work to be heard without interruptions to change the disc, even the most spoiled listeners will have little to complain about.) While how to please devotees of classical music seems a specialized problem, it points up one of the virtues of gramophone records for any station: they could be played when live performers were not available. But of course a station had to renew its stock from time to time. VORL, broadcasting to the “native” audience

⁵ “Kalau kita pada permulaan siaran kita teroetama sekali mesti bekerdja dengan moesik dari piring gramofoon, tetapi lambat-laoen moesik dari piring gramofoon ini oemoemnja hanja dipakai oentoek mengisi waktue jang terloeang antara doea siaran hidoep jang banjak benar didalam programma kita. Djadi sebaliknja siaran-hidoep itoelah sekarang jang mendjadi siaran-oetama didalam programma kita” (*Soeara Nirom* 1940e).

in Bandung, complained in 1939 that its listeners were bored with all the records VORL owned or could borrow from its members, and for lack of new records VORL could not, unlike other stations, broadcast in the morning hours.⁶ (Presumably live musicians, who might be working during the day, could not be counted on for morning broadcasts.)

Another virtue of the gramophone record was that it was cheap compared to live performers: one had to pay musicians every time they played on the air, but a one-time purchase bought a record the station could play indefinitely. An inventory statement from VORO in Batavia shows that in 1937 that station had 377 records in inventory, and it couples this information with a statement that 2208 hours of gramophone music were broadcast in that year (*Pewartar V.O.R.O.* 1938). If, for the sake of a rough calculation, we assume that all the records it broadcast were the ones in its own inventory, that each side of each record was three minutes long, and that the station played all the records the same number of times, then each side of each record would have been played nearly 60 times in the course of the year.

Table 4.1, put together from disparate sources, sketches the proportions of live music and recorded music broadcast in the DEI. (Some details of the table, such as the relation of VORO to NIROM, will become clear later in this chapter.) It is apparent from the table that the amount of recorded music was considerably higher in broadcasting to the Western (*Westerse*) audience. It stands to reason that with some 215 Indonesians, Chinese, and “other Asiatics” for every one European in Java and Madura (and over 250:1 for the whole

⁶ *Berita VORL* 1939. According to its 1938 inventory statement, VORL owned 705 playable (*bruikbaar*) records and another 309 unplayable (*onbruikbaar*) that were presumably either broken or worn out (*Berita VORL* 1938b).

	<i>Live music (hours)</i>	<i>Live % of TM</i>	<i>Gramo records (hours)</i>	<i>Gramo % of TM</i>	<i>Total music (TM) (hours)</i>
NIROM WESTERSCHE *					
1935		32%		68%	100%
1937		18%		82%	100%
1939		27%		73%	100%
1940		24%		76%	100%
NIROM OOSTERSCHE 1936 **					
Batavia (VORO)	831	40%	1227	60%	2058
Bandung	935	46%	1115	54%	2050
Surabaya	1050	51%	998	49%	2049
VORO (BATAVIA)					
1935 (VORO for NIROM) ***	784	47%	885	53%	1669
1936 (VORO for NIROM) **	831	40%	1227	60%	2058
1937 (VORO alone) ***	1004	31%	2208	69%	3212
1938 (VORO alone) ***	1007	30%	2296	70%	3303

Table 4.1. Broadcasting of live and recorded music (including theater) on DEI radio, shown as number of hours (yearly) and as percentages of total music broadcasting.

Notes to Table 4.1:

* Figures for the NIROM Westersche Programma come from Witte 1992:29 for 1935 and 1939, and from Witte 1998:113 for 1937 and 1940. They are apparently based on tabulations of one month's broadcasts for each year.

** Figures for the NIROM Oostersche Programma in 1936 come from *Pewartar V.O.R.O.* 1936b and 1936c and cover two four week periods (19 July–15 August and 13 September–10 October 1936). The figures have been averaged and extrapolated to cover a full year.

*** These figures (except 1936, for which see the ** note) come from VORO sources and cover a full year, requiring no extrapolation. For 1935: *VORO Jubileum-nummer*. For 1937: *Pewartar V.O.R.O.* 1938. For 1938: *Pewartar V.O.R.O.* 1939a.

colony), there would have been a bigger pool of musicians available to play live for the Eastern audience.

I still have not fully answered the question of why this chapter concentrates on live music. Partly the reason is that, as I said at the start, it is meant to complement my research on gramophone records. Since I discuss elsewhere in this study the character and circumstances of recorded music in the DEI—including, naturally, the records played on the radio—I can concentrate here on what was unique to radio, namely the live broadcasting. Another reason is that, as we have seen, both the stations and the audiences believed that (in VORO's words) "true broadcasting" was live; it was what the medium was meant for. And a third reason is suggested by the quotation from Jennifer Lindsay I have taken as an epigraph: live broadcasting was an inherently modern thing to do in the closing years of the colonial era. I shall return to the modernity of radio at the end of this chapter.

A brief history of radio in the DEI ⁷

Radio begins in the DEI as the hobby of the wealthy—amateur enthusiasts, first in Batavia, then in other main cities, and mostly if not entirely within the segment of the population designated European.⁸ The first organized radio group was the Bataviase Radiovereeniging (BRV), which in 1925 began broadcasting (in Dutch) from the Hôtel des Indes in Batavia. Operating expenses were covered by the members of the *vereeniging* (association) themselves. A more commercial venture was initiated a few years later by the Nederlands-Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij (Dutch East Indies Radio Broadcasting Company), known as NIROM, incorporated in Amsterdam in December 1928 with capital from three investors: Radio-Holland, the Philips group, and Maintz & Co. The aim of the venture was to develop broadcasting from Holland to the DEI, and within the DEI itself.

⁷ For other general accounts, see *Sedjarah Radio* 1953 and Wild 1987, and for detailed considerations of specific topics, see Lindsay 1997 (private radio before and after Independence) and Witte 1998 (NIROM, with emphasis on the Westersche Programma). Mrázek 2002 includes a meditation on radio's place in the imagination of the colony. Like the present chapter, Takonai 2007 examines music programming, but for different time-periods and with different points of focus. (See footnote 29.) Another work making use of radio program guides, though not focused primarily on music, is Wiryawan 2011, which concentrates on the private *ketimuran* stations, particularly SRV. (I thank Alan Feinstein and Jennifer Lindsay for bringing this book to my attention.) Wiryawan and I differ in focus and disagree in interpretation: dualistically, he sees the private radio stations as motivated by a heroic ideological and nationalistic commitment to protecting Indonesian or Eastern culture from Western poison, and NIROM as opportunistically imitative of the private stations, motivated by political and cutthroat commercial imperatives; whereas I see all the *ketimuran* stations, including NIROM, as broadcasting the same material (much of it already Western, despite the *ketimuran* rhetoric) and using the same formats, with NIROM—if only because it had more money, better equipment, and a broader network—coming the closest (though still not very close) to reflecting and honoring Indonesia's cultural diversity. Wiryawan seems determined to demonize NIROM, and, partly because of this bias and partly because of incomplete information, there are inaccuracies in his treatment of several key topics, such as NIROM's *ketimuran* programming, the nature and availability of gramophone records in the DEI, and NIROM's relation to SRV. (In order, I think, to protect SRV's image, he mentions the subsidy NIROM paid to VORO but not the one it paid to SRV from 1934 through 1937 and perhaps beyond; see footnote 19 here.) Despite its partisan slant, Wiryawan's is a well-researched study of radio in the DEI.

⁸ The term covered persons born in Europe of European parents, persons born in the Indies of European parents, and recognized children of unions between a Dutch father and an Asian mother. (Curiously, Japanese were also classified as Europeans. Chinese and Arabs were not.) For more on this topic, see van der Veur 1955 (ch. 2), and van Marle 1951-52.

In September 1930 a proposal from NIROM was debated and ultimately approved in the Volksraad (People's Assembly) in Batavia, and in January 1933 the government of the DEI granted NIROM a ten-year concession to conduct broadcasting operations in the colony. Private radio groups like BRV were allowed to stay on the air, but none had the resources to compete with NIROM's powerful transmitters. A year after the concession was granted, NIROM began broadcasting.

Despite the threat (and, from 1934, the fact) of NIROM, small radio groups continued to emerge in the DEI throughout the first half of the decade. In 1930, Mangkunegara VII, officially the "younger" of the two princes of Surakarta (Solo), gave a small transmitter to a *kunstkring* (arts circle) of aristocratic art patrons, who used it to broadcast gamelan concerts from the Mangkunegara's palace (the Mangkunegaran) every 35 days. At that time there were no more than 20 radio receivers in Solo! In early 1933 a group of people affiliated with the Mangkunegaran was formed to upgrade the transmitter and plan regular broadcasts.

Describing itself as a *perhimpunan* (collective), this group was formally established on 1 April 1933, under the name Solosche Radio Vereeniging (Solo Radio Association, SRV), but it did not begin broadcasting until eight or nine months later.⁹ SRV was the first of the stations devoted to what would come to be called *siaran* (or *radio*) *ketimuran*, "broadcasting of an Eastern

⁹ There is a discrepancy in SRV sources regarding the date of the first broadcast. In a speech at the official opening of SRV on 24 January 1934, Sarsito Mangoenkoesoemo, the chairman of SRV, says the initial trial broadcast occurred on 14 December 1933, and further broadcasts were made every night thereafter (*Darmo-Kondo* 1934a). In a 1939 article Sarsito again says the first broadcast was in mid-December 1933 (1939:183). But the station's 1936 anniversary book, the *SRV gedenkboek* ([1936]:6), says it took place on 5 January 1934, which it specifies was "Saptoe Kliwon . . . pada sorenja, hari malam Akad Legi" (that is, it was Saturday in the seven-day week and Kliwon in the five-day market week, and the time was the eve of Sunday-Legi; this latter detail fixes the day as Saturday proper, not the eve of Saturday, which in European reckoning would still be Friday). In fact, 5 January 1934 was a Friday; if the first broadcast occurred on Saturday-Kliwon, the date was 6 January 1934. Wiryawan (2011:86,182) repeats the *Gedenkboek's* date of 5 January 1934. The date given by Sarsito fell on a Thursday, not a Saturday.

character” (“Eastern broadcasting” for short). These *particulier* or “private” stations broadcast primarily in Indonesian and concentrated on content of interest to *pribumi*, Eurasian, and Chinese-Indonesian listeners.

The next private *ketimuran* association to appear, known as MAVRO (standing for Mataramsche Vereeniging voor Radio Omroep, “Mataram [=Yogyakarta] Association for Radio Broadcasting”), was formed by a group of aristocrats from the Yogyakarta courts in February 1934. Other *ketimuran* radio groups emerged later that year: one in Batavia that was first called VORL (for Vereeniging van Oostersche Radio Luisteraars, “Association of Eastern Radio Listeners”) but changed its name (in late December 1934, after the agreement with NIROM was negotiated) to VORO (Vereeniging voor Oostersche Omroep, “Association for Eastern Broadcasting”);¹⁰ one in Surabaya called CIRVO (Chineesche en Inheemsche Radioluisteraars Vereniging Oost Java, “Association of Chinese and Native Radio Listeners of East Java”); and one affiliated with the Kraton Solo (the “older” Solonese principedom), called SRI (Siaran Radio Indonesia, “Indonesian Radio Broadcasting”). SRI was not a *perhimpunan*, since it had no subscribers; it described itself instead as a “philanthropic service” of the Kraton to disseminate Javanese high culture. Still more *ketimuran* groups started in the next years: VORL (Vereeniging voor Oosterse Radio Luisteraars, “Association for Eastern Radio Listeners”) in Bandung at the end of 1935, and Radio Semarang in 1936.

Although they will not be discussed at any length in this chapter, one should note that there were also private radio groups broadcasting primarily to a Europe-oriented, Dutch-

¹⁰ The name was changed because the association thought the original name implied that only Asians could become members, whereas “there are many groups other than Easterners [*golongan diloear Ketimoeran*] who are devoted to Eastern broadcasting” (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1935c). Undeterred, the radio group that formed in Bandung in late 1935 (see *Berita VORL* 1938a for this date) took the name VORO had discarded.

speaking audience. On the model of the phrase *siaran ketimuran*, these can be called *siaran kebaratan* (“Western broadcasting”).¹¹ Four such groups formed the Omroep Vereeniging in Java (Broadcasting Association of Java) and in January 1935 began publishing a joint program guide, the *Radio-Bode*. The four groups in the association were: BRV (Bataviase Radio Vereeniging), PMY in Bandung, RVMJ in Semarang, and ARVO in Surabaya.

The salient distinction between NIROM and the private radio groups is precisely that the private groups were private, responsible only to their membership, while NIROM answered to the government.¹² It is less relevant to stress, as one writer has, that NIROM was a profit-making venture and the private groups were not. The commercial aspect of NIROM should not be overemphasized: NIROM did not make its money from advertising, but rather from a government-administered compulsory license fee levied on radios, known as the *luisterbijdrage* (listening contribution) or *omroepbijdrage* (broadcasting contribution).¹³ In return for the concession, the government demanded that NIROM’s broadcasts reach the whole of Java within one year from the start of broadcasting and the entire colony within three years. NIROM was also responsible for ensuring that its broadcasts not conflict with the interests of the State, the laws of the land, public order, and good morals.¹⁴

¹¹ *Soeara Nirom* sometimes uses this term (e.g. 1938a).

¹² The private groups were engaged in what today in the United States would be called “listener-supported radio.”

¹³ In 1934 the *luisterbijdrage* for NIROM was f3.- a month. By 1938 it had come down to f1.50 a month, still a significant sum. At the beginning of January 1939 it went down again a *talen* to f1.25. The license covered only NIROM. Listeners to the other *ketimuran* stations were expected—implored—to become members and make monthly contributions: in 1938, the contribution for an ordinary member (there were higher, more expensive grades as well) was f1 a month for VORO, VORL, and MAVRO, f0.50 for SRV.

¹⁴ This is the gist of Article 6, paragraph 6 of the Gouvernements Besluit (Governmental decree) no. 38, which granted the concession to NIROM on 30 December 1932. (The decree, first published in the *Javasche Courant* on 10 January 1933, is photographically reproduced in Witte 1998:190-194.) In keeping with Article 6, the government required the private *ketimuran* stations—but not apparently NIROM—to submit scripts of all spoken-word material to officials of the Post, Telegraph, and Telephone Service for review before broadcast. This must have been an onerous requirement for comedians, *dhalang* (puppeteers), and theater troupes, all of whom

NIROM's first official broadcast took place on 1 April 1934. Radio technology did not yet permit signals from one studio, even with relays, to reach all the way from Batavia to East Java, so NIROM had to set up two studios, one in Batavia and one in Surabaya, and broadcast separate programmes from each. At the start, broadcasting was only in Dutch and served almost exclusively the Europe-oriented audience, with an hour or two per week for Asian gramophone records; this broadcasting was known as the Westersche ("Western") Programma.

Two months later, at the end of May, NIROM announced in its program guide, *De N.I.R.O.M.-Bode*, that Indonesian (*Inlandsche*) and Chinese listeners had requested that NIROM make more room for Eastern (*Oostersche*) music in its broadcasts. "But to fulfill this request," the announcement continued,

would be a difficult matter, because it doesn't seem possible to take time from the programme we already have and use it for Eastern music. It is certain that Eastern music is not much liked by the European public, just as the Indonesian public does not much like European music. The number of registered listeners to NIROM is at present around 6200, of whom circa 1250 are Natives, Chinese, and Foreign Asiatics.¹⁵ Given this ratio, it would be unfair of NIROM to split its programming between European and Eastern music. The only solution that would be fair for all parties is to set up separate transmitters to broadcast European and Eastern music (*N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1934b).¹⁶

typically worked without a script. I have come across one documented incident where the rule was applied: in March 1937 a scheduled broadcast on VORO by the Chinese Opera troupe Hiap Kioen Hie had to be cancelled, because the script had not been sent to the government 14 days beforehand for approval (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1937b, 1937d). A similar incident involving a *tayuban* broadcast on SRV (in itself rather surprising) is mentioned in an August 1938 newspaper article (*Sin Tit Po* 1938), but I do not have the details.

¹⁵ The official figure for radio licenses at the end of 1933 (see Table 4.2a) was 8,580, far above the figure NIROM gives here. I have no explanation for the discrepancy.

¹⁶ "Dari pihak publik bangsa Indonesia dan Tionghoa banjak datang permintaän kepada kita, soepaja lebih banjak diloeangkan tempat dalam programma boeat lagoe-lagoe Timoer. Akan memenoehi permintaän itoe adalah satoe perkara jang soesah djoega, sebab tidak moengkin rasanja boeat mengambil waktoe lagi dari programma jang soedah ada itoe boeat lagoe Timoer. Soedah tentoe lagoe Timoer tidak begitoe disoekai oleh publik bangsa Eropah, seperti djoega publik bangsa timoer djoega koerang menjoekai lagoe-lagoe Eropah. . . ." (*N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1934c). The Dutch version of the sentence beginning (in my translation) "It is certain" ("Soedah tentoe" in Indonesian) is: "Het Europeesche publik waardeert nu eenmaal slechts in geringe mate de Oostersche muziek en wij kunnen ons indenken, dat zij, die special op Oostersche muziek zijn gesteld, weinig gevoelen voor het Europeesche programma-gedeelte" (*N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1934b).

Soon there were more complaints from the non-European listeners, including an *aksie-vergadering* (protest meeting) in Batavia on 10 June 1934, in which listeners complained that NIROM's idea of Oostersche programming was to broadcast only a few hours a week, only gramophone records, and only at times when few people were listening (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1935b). Apparently these protests were mainly on behalf of West Javanese listeners, since at the time of its official opening NIROM had already worked out an arrangement to pay a subsidy to SRV in Solo to relay live broadcasts to audiences in Central Java.¹⁷ Beginning in January 1935 NIROM gave a further subsidy to VORO, the private *ketimuran* group in Batavia, to organize NIROM's live broadcasting to Batavia's Oostersche listeners.¹⁸ NIROM continued its subsidy to SRV and made a similar arrangement with MAVRO in Yogyakarta; in Surabaya and Bandung, NIROM handled the Oostersche programming itself. Thus by August 1935, when NIROM began to publish *Soeara Nirom*, its biweekly, Indonesian-language program guide for the Oostersche Programma, NIROM was in fact broadcasting five different Oostersche programmes: to Batavia, Bandung, Yogya, Solo/Semarang, and Surabaya.

Near the end of 1935, NIROM began to take over from VORO more of the programming for Batavia, while continuing to pay subsidies to VORO, MAVRO, and SRV. But in late 1936 NIROM announced that from January 1937 it would start to handle all of its *ketimuran* broadcasting itself and would therefore reduce the subsidies to the private stations.¹⁹ This decision caused an uproar among the private stations, which dreaded the loss of income and

¹⁷ This subsidy arrangement was announced to the members of SRV on 1 April 1934, in a speech by the chairman, Ir. R. M. Sarsito, on the occasion of the beginning of NIROM's regular broadcasting (*Darmo-Kondo* 1934b).

¹⁸ The way VORO phrased this was: VORO's programs were broadcast over NIROM's transmitter, on the wavelength 190 m. (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1935a).

¹⁹ In 1935 VORO received a subsidy of f500 a month from NIROM (*VORO Jubileum-nummer* 1936:10). In 1938 the subsidy was f200 a month (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1939b). René Witte reports that SRV received f625 a month in 1935 and f300 a month in 1937, and MAVRO f450 in 1935 and f150 in 1937 (Witte 1998:144).

also feared that their most popular live performers would be wooed away by NIROM. The matter was raised in the Volksraad, and, surprisingly, the government's response was not to dismiss the issue but rather to suggest that the private stations should unite in a single organization to manage *siaran ketimuran*. This suggestion led to the formation, in late March 1937, of the Perikatan Perkoempoelan Radio Ketimoeran (Federation of Eastern Radio Associations, known as PPRK), encompassing VORO (Batavia), MAVRO (Yogyakarta), SRV (Solo), VORL (Bandung), Radio Semarang, and CIRVO (Surabaya). (SRI in Solo was not part of the federation.) PPRK eventually—a long time later, in November 1940—took over all *siaran ketimuran* from NIROM, and broadcast until the Japanese ousted the Dutch from the DEI in March 1942.

The year I focus on in this chapter, 1938, sits right in the middle of this history. By 1938, NIROM was broadcasting its Westersche Programma to the whole of the DEI from Batavia, the Surabaya and Batavia Westersche programmes having been consolidated in Batavia in 1937. Taking over the *ketimuran* programming from the private stations had enabled NIROM to consolidate Oostersche broadcasting as well. Rather than five Oostersche programmes it was now broadcasting only two: one to West Java from studios in Batavia and Bandung, and one to East and Central Java from the studio in Surabaya. The Surabaya programme was also sent out to the “Groote Oost” (the islands of the “Great East” beyond Java),²⁰ and transmitters in West Java sent the Batavia/Bandung programme west to Sumatra. For the most part, NIROM was handling its *ketimuran* programming itself, though it relayed some broadcasts originating from

²⁰ Also to the north of Java? It is not clear whether NIROM considered Borneo part of the Groote Oost, or simply did not consider it. Administratively, Borneo and the Groote Oost were separate residencies, and they are treated as such in the DEI government's annual *Indisch verslag*. (See, e.g., *Indisch verslag 1941*, 2:461.)

YEAR	EUROPEANS	PRIBUMI ("Natives")	CHINESE & Other Asiatics	TOTAL
1927				1,106
1928				1,567
1929				2,132
1930				2,464
1931				2,780
1932				4,844
1933				8,580
1934				16,875
1935	19,020	4,411	4,135	27,566
1936	25,681	7,259	6,088	39,028
1937	32,756	12,238	9,468	54,462
1938	39,919	18,173	12,817	70,909
1939	45,039	25,608	16,863	87,510
1940	50,054	31,539	20,275	101,868

Table 4.2a. Licenses for use of radio sets in DEI. Source: *Indisch verslag 1941, part 2*. The same figures appear in volumes of the *Statistisch zakboekje voor Nederlandsch Indië* and in the *Statistical pocket book of Indonesia 1941*.

	EUROPEANS	PRIBUMI	CHINESE & Other Asiatics	TOTAL
1930	240,417	59,138,067	1,348,749	60,727,233

Table 4.2b. Total population of the DEI in 1930. Source: *Volkstelling 1930*.

	EUROPEANS	PRIBUMI	CHINESE & Other Asiatics	TOTAL
1938	16.6%	0.031%	0.95%	0.12%

Table 4.2c. Percentage of 1930 population holding radio licenses in 1938.

one or another of the private stations, and it had an ongoing arrangement with SRI to relay gamelan performances by musicians of the Kraton Solo. At the same time, the private *ketimuran* stations were broadcasting to their respective regions, without substantial subsidy from NIROM. The handover of all *siaran ketimuran* to PPRK, to be broadcast over NIROM's transmitters but with content unsupervised by NIROM, was still two years off.

Table 4.2 situates 1938 in DEI's radio history statistically, showing how many radio licenses (conventionally equated with the number of radio sets)²¹ were owned in various population groups in the DEI from 1927 to 1940.²²

The Westersche Programma

I have not tabulated NIROM's Western programme fully for 1938, as I have its Eastern programme, but a look at several weeks will give the idea. (See Table 4.4 in the Appendix to this chapter.) The programming is dominated by the NIROM house ensembles and personnel—the Omroep Orkest (Broadcast Orchestra) and Studio Orkest directed by Carel van der Bijl, and the NIROM Quintet, directed by Boris Mariëff. Carel van der Bijl, a violinist, also leads a trio

²¹ At least in theory, one could not buy a radio without paying for a license. Whether people found ways to buy unlicensed radios, or whether they could allow their license to lapse after a year and still manage to listen, is not clear to me. Citing a thesis by Budi Sulaksono (1993) that in turn cites a document in the Mangkunegaran Archive, Wiryawan says there were nine radio receivers in the Mangkunegaran palace compound in May 1941 (2011:84); later (207) he says that they were all unlicensed, but he does not say how he (or Sulaksono?) knows this. It seems a strange thing to note in a document, that the nine palace radios were illegal.

²² Citing the *Statistical pocket book of Indonesia 1941*, published in Batavia in 1947, René Witte (1998:124) gives figures that differ from those in Table 4.2. In fact, something went wrong with Witte's table. The figures in the *Statistical pocket book* (1947:145) exactly match those in Table 4.2 (which I took from *Indisch verslag 1941*). Witte's table unaccountably interpolates a line of figures for 1935 that are not in the *Statistical pocketbook*, and this interpolation throws off all the subsequent figures by one year. Thus the figures shown for 1935–1940 in my Table 4.2 and in the *Statistical pocket book* are shown in Witte for 1936–1941.

under his own name and plays chamber music with other instrumentalists.²³ For the rest, there are regular broadcasts from the house orchestras at the Hôtel des Indes in Batavia and the Societeit Concordia in Bandung and broadcasts by three Hawaiian music groups and a popular-music group of unidentified specialty, the Caroline Crooners & Avalon Boys. There are chamber music and vocal recitals by performers who may be regulars in the NIROM ensembles or perhaps local amateurs. There is one big concert, lasting two hours, by the Bataviasche Orkest-Vereeniging “Toonkunst” (Batavian Orchestra Association “The Art of Music”), directed by J. de Ruyter Korver, with Theo van der Pas as piano soloist;²⁴ the program contains Mozart’s Symphony no. 39, his Piano Concerto no. 23, Tchaikovsky’s Serenade for Strings, two piano pieces by Chopin, and, interestingly, a “grammophon-intermezzo.”²⁵

Aside from the “Toonkunst” concert, the Hawaiian music, and the performance by the Caroline Crooners et al., everything here is what would now be called “light classical.” The various distinctions—lunch concert, early afternoon concert, tea-time concert, etc.—do not seem to correlate with differences in programming, though a plain “concert,” without a time-of-day designation, seems to have been somewhat weightier than the others. (Playlists 1 & 2.)

²³ An Internet search indicates that after the war Carel van der Bijl became first violinist of the Brabant Orchestra in Holland.

²⁴ Theo van der Pas (1902–1986) was a prominent Dutch pianist (*Encyclopedie* 1956-57: II:442). He played a Chopin piano concerto in a 1943 radio broadcast under Mengelberg, and his recordings of Beethoven piano sonatas and a Brahms cello sonata (accompanying Emanuel Feuermann) were issued by Columbia.

²⁵ The playing of gramophone records as interludes in live performances occurred not only in Western classical music concerts, but in *kroncong* and Javanese gamelan programs as well. I have seen no explanations of why broadcasters wanted to do this, so I can only speculate: partly for variety, I imagine; to give the live performers a cigarette break; and perhaps because gramophone technology was still exciting enough (and of improved quality, after the introduction of electrical recording in 1927) that it added glamor to the broadcast. Nevertheless, the juxtapositions could be jarring: in an exchange of letters published in *Djawa*, the Javanist scholars Poerbatjaraka and Brandts Buys complain about broadcasts where *kroncong* records are played in the pauses between Javanese gamelan compositions (1934:214,222).

There are two big omissions in this programming. One is live jazz: there were jazz bands, with Eurasian and sometimes *pribumi* and *peranakan* Chinese²⁶ personnel, functioning in Batavia at the time (see Möller 1987), but one didn't hear them on NIROM.²⁷ ("Dansmuziek" programs from the Hôtel des Indes and the Societeit Concordia may have included touches of jazz, but one assumes those society orchestras were more sedate than Brown's Sugar Babies or The Musketeers of Swing and other jazz bands Möller names.) And the other is, of course, *kroncong*, the predominant form of popular music in Indonesia at the time: not a note of live *kroncong* in the Westersche Programma.²⁸ I have not checked to see whether there were any periods of gramophone-music set aside for *kroncong*, but it seems unlikely. In a survey of everything (including gramophone records) broadcast on all NIROM stations during nine days in May 1938 (this is a separate mini-research project, not presented here), I found no *kroncong* at all on the Westersche Programma, neither live nor recorded. Not only was there no *kroncong*, there was no music with *any* Indonesian theme—not Godowsky's Javanese piano pieces, nothing by Paul Seelig or any of the other "Indische" composers discussed by Franki Raden (Notosudirdjo 2001) or Henk Mak van Dijk (2007). Virtually the only indication that NIROM's Westersche broadcasting was situated in the Indies is the "NI" in the station's name.

²⁶ Persons of mixed Chinese and Indonesian ancestry were termed *peranakan*. The term could also be used for persons of full Chinese ancestry born in Indonesia, but it implied a degree of assimilation to Indonesian language and culture.

²⁷ Even if NIROM had wished to broadcast Batavian jazz on gramophone records, it could not have mustered more than six minutes, since only one commercial disc of a Batavia jazz band was ever issued. This was His Master's Voice NT 33, released in January 1936, on which The Silver Kings played *Dinah* and *Ma* [=Ma, *He's Making Eyes at Me*]. For more on this disc, including a letter from the Sultan of Kutai acknowledging receipt of a copy, see Möller 1987:29,61.

²⁸ One did, however, hear live broadcasts of both *kroncong* and Batavia jazz groups on BRV, the private *kebaratan* radio in Batavia. For a discussion of *kroncong* in this period, see chapter 5.

PLAYLIST 1. European music. Two broadcasts by the Nirom Quintet on the same day

(a) *Matinée-concert door het Nirom-Quintet onder leiding van Boris Mariëff.* [Matinée concert by the Nirom-Quintet, led by Boris Mariëff].

NIROM Westersche Programma, 7 August 1938, 12:00-12:35.

[Emil] Waldteufel. Deux à deux (waltz)
Grieg. Arabic Dance (from *Peer Gynt*)
Mühlenau. Wiener Puppen
Sumkay. Badinerie
Zimmer. Echo der Welt

(b) *Vooravondconcert door het Nirom-Quintet onder leiding van Boris Mariëff.* [Early evening concert by the Nirom-Quintet, led by Boris Mariëff.]

NIROM Westersche Programma, 7 August 1938, 18:20-19:00.

[Percy] Elliot[t]. In Sunny Spain (suite)
Johann Strauss [II]. Telegramme (waltz)
[W. C.]Powell. Fascination
Dvořák. Third Slavonic Dance
Meyerbeer-[Oscar] Fetrás. Les Huguenots (fantasie)

PLAYLIST 2. European music. An evening concert by the Omroep Orkest

Concert door het Omroep-Orkest onder leiding van Carel van der Bijl. [Concert by the Broadcast Orchestra, led by Carel van der Bijl].

NIROM Westersche Programma, 15 August 1938, 20:30-21:30.

[Adolphe] Adam. Si j'étais roi (ouverture)
Dvořák. Suite, op. 98
Leoncavallo. Prélude to the 3rd act of *Maia*
Mascagni. Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*
[Ludwig] Grossman[n]. Czardas from *Geist des Wojewoden*
Gounod. Le tribut de Zamora: Danse espagnole & Danse italienne

The Oostersche Programma

Table 4.5 in the Appendix to this chapter summarizes the live music on all five of the *ketimuran* stations I have studied—the two NIROM “Eastern stations” (that is, the West Java and East/Central Java sectors of the Oostersche Programma, broadcast from Batavia/Bandung and Surabaya, respectively), as well as VORO (Batavia), VORL (Bandung), and SRV (Surakarta).²⁹

The total absence of Indonesia on NIROM’s Westersche Programma is not mirrored in *siaran ketimuran*: there is a little bit of Western music on all five stations, and a bit more than a little on VORO, which tried to recognize the heterogeneity of the Batavia population (as did NIROM in the Batavia/Bandung sector of its Oostersche Programma). But the great preponderance of programming on the Eastern stations is eastern, as one would expect given the polarized structure of NIROM’s broadcasting.³⁰

Many genres are common across the board, though regional preferences or emphases are apparent if we compare the quantities, both of broadcasts and of performing groups:

- *Kroncong* and *Hawaiian* were strong on all stations, though *Hawaiian* was strongest in broadcasts from Solo and *kroncong* was strongest in broadcasts from Batavia.
- Central Javanese gamelan – one would expect to find it regnant in Solo, but it is surprising to see how prevalent it was in cities not predominantly Central Javanese. It was broadcast regularly both to Batavia and Bandung from the Gedong Museum in Batavia; moreover, the Bupati of Bandung supported a Central Javanese gamelan that broadcast not only performances but also instructional programs. Some of the latter provided accompaniment for dance practice (*wireng*), but it is not clear how the others instructed. Perhaps aspiring musicians played at home on their *gender* or *rebab* along with the radio broadcast?

²⁹ Takonai’s 2007 article offers a similar study of NIROM’s Oostersche programming for two weeks in 1936 (16–31 October) and four weeks in 1942 (4–31 January). His article does not distinguish between live broadcasting and the broadcasting of gramophone records.

³⁰ I shall return to the matter of polarization later in this chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note the existence of a Western Programme broadcast entirely in Dutch, with a program guide published in Dutch and all of its music wholly Western; and an Eastern Programme broadcast entirely in Indonesian, with its program guide in Indonesian and its programming devoted to music of Asia with only a slight touch of the West.

- *Macapat*, a Central Javanese genre of sung poetry using a variety of stanza patterns with associated vocal melodies, was also well represented (both as performance and as instruction) not only in Solo but also on the Surabaya station, and, to a lesser extent, as performance only, in Batavia. It was, however, wholly absent from Bandung.
- Sundanese music, strong in Bandung (of course) and Batavia, was nonexistent on SRV and negligible on NIROM Surabaya.
- East Javanese genres had no presence anywhere but in Surabaya.
- Chinese music was relatively well distributed, though weak in Solo and weaker still in Bandung.
- Gambus and harmonium orchestras, which had explicit Muslim associations, were most energetically broadcast in Batavia and Surabaya.
- Sumatran music was largely a concern of NIROM, though VORO also addressed the Minangkabau population in Batavia.³¹

What is *not* here? There is surprisingly little Muslim devotional music, though there were certainly lectures on Islam and there was live Qur’anic recitation (*pengajian*).³² Again no jazz; I don’t understand why not—though the eclectic *Hawaiian* programs (see below) included some songs that could be counted as jazz or what was called *hot* music (in Indonesia as in Europe and the U.S.). There is also nothing from Kalimantan, or Sulawesi, or anywhere east of Bali, and hardly anything from Bali itself. Given the prominence of Balinese gamelan in today’s picture of Indonesian music, we may find this puzzling, but we must remember the constraints

³¹ VORO broadcast programs of “*lagoe-lagoe Minangkabau asli*” (old-style Minangkabau music; this translation of *asli* is discussed in footnote 81 below), performed by the Perkoempoelan A.S.A. under the direction of Tamimi gelar Soetan Roemah Tinggi, 22 times in 1938—not at all in the first three months, but four times in April, five times in May, and two or three times each month thereafter. Although outnumbered by Melayu in Batavia, the Minang were the only Sumatran ethnic group VORO programmed for. The reason for singling them out may be simply what the director of VORO explained in a disgruntled-sounding article in January 1937 after NIROM reduced its subsidy to the station: “*Before* [i.e. when VORO was tailoring its programming to NIROM’s requirements], VORO had to pay attention to all the groups of people of the East [*semoea golongan dari bangsa Timoer*] and had to play music from all of them. *Now* we are working only for our own members. So if, for example, we have no one with a Hindu name in our membership list, we don’t have to play Hindu music. Hindus can look for their music on NIROM. They are *obliged* to pay NIROM every month [for NIROM’s program guide], so it is their *right* to hear the music they care for. If they become members of VORO, then VORO will be obliged to play the music they like” (*Pewarta V.O.RO*. 1937a). So VORO must have had members with Minang names, but none with Batak or Melayu names. Probably there were more Minang than other Sumatrans in Batavia who were interested in radio and also able to pay for both NIROM (obligatory) and VORO (optional).

³² I have excluded *pengajian* from the tabulation because in Islam recitation of the Qur’an is not considered music.

of radio in those years. Since there was no studio in Bali, the only way Balinese gamelan could be broadcast live would be for a gamelan to be transported to one of the Javanese cities with a studio—an expensive proposition.³³ (The lone form of Balinese music appearing in Table 4.5 is *janger*, broadcast three times by SRV; but *janger*, requiring only singers and a few instruments, was far more portable than a full Balinese gamelan.) The same applies to Kalimantan and the “Great East”: unless there were performers and instruments in the cities on Java that had radio studios, there could be no live broadcasts of their music.³⁴

Specific genres

The program guides reveal interesting aspects of the character of various genres in radio performance. One is the elasticity of some of them. For example, broadcasts of East Javanese gamelan music from the NIROM studio in Surabaya were often interspersed (*diselingi*) with pieces played by the studio’s *angklung* orchestra.³⁵ *Gambus* broadcasts typically consisted of seven or eight numbers, of which most were sung in Arabic but at least two were “extra Melajoe.” (Playlists 3 & 4.)

³³ But not, apparently, impossible: on 5 March 1941 Mangkunegara VII sponsored a *malam kesenian Bali* (Balinese arts night) that was broadcast live over SRV (Wiryanan 2011:93). Perhaps a Balinese troupe was on tour. In any case, it was presumably the Mangkunegara who paid for the event, not SRV.

³⁴ Nor were there any gramophone records of music from Kalimantan or the eastern islands at that time. There were, however, recordings of Balinese music, and these were played on the radio.

³⁵ This orchestra is something of a mystery. *Angklung* is a folk instrument, known throughout Java and Bali but most common in West Java, consisting of two or more bamboo tubes tuned in octaves and loosely mounted in a frame; when the frame is shaken the tubes strike the frame and emit their pitch. Traditionally, *angklung* in Java are played in tuned sets producing only a few pitches or at most a pentatonic scale, but in 1938 a Sundanese schoolteacher in West Java named Daeng Soetigna began making *angklung* sets tuned to Western scales and capable of playing European melodies. (The pinpointing to 1938 comes from Sumarsono & Pirous 2007:xxi.) What then was the *angklung* orchestra of NIROM’s Surabaya studio playing in 1938? Javanese folk music with traditionally tuned *angklung*? That music has a very limited repertoire. Was it an East Javanese version of Daeng Soetigna’s diatonic *angklung*? This would be the first indication I have seen that Soetigna’s innovation spread so rapidly out of West Java (or alternatively that it emerged independently in East Java). Was it a Surabaya version of the Banyuwangi ensemble known as *angklung* but featuring bamboo tube-xylophones rather than shaken tube-rattles? It seems extremely unlikely that it could have been any form of the Balinese *gamelan angklung*.

This idea of the *extra* needs investigation. The term appears frequently in the playlists for radio broadcasts, where it usually seems to mean any piece of music outside the normal style or repertoire of the principal genre being broadcast. The term is close to *selingan* (alternation, insertion), as with the *angklung* in the broadcasts of East Javanese gamelan music, but it is more flexible: if genre A is *diselingi* with genre B, you can expect to hear those two kinds of music, genres A and B.³⁶ But if genre A is your main program, and there are “extra songs” (*lagu extra*), you don’t know what genre or genres they might belong to. The term apparently derives from the practice of the *bangsawan* or *stambul* theater, where “extra” songs and dances, unrelated to the plot—cakewalks, cariocas, dances from India, whatever—could be inserted as entr’actes.

On the other hand, in the repertoire of Sundanese *tembang* (the high-status genre that was the normal repertoire of the many groups called *ketjapi orkest*), the *lagu extra* (later called *panambih*) became not a whatever but a specific type of song. In a typical performance of *tembang Sunda*, a group of unmetred *tembang*, all using one tuning or scale, would be followed by a metered *panambih* in the same tuning or scale.³⁷ Usually sung by women (whereas the unmetred *tembang* could be sung by men or women), their lyrics concerned love and natural beauty, and the songs carried a subtle erotic charge. Partly because of the star

³⁶ The combinations could be pretty strange. Witness the fifth anniversary concert of The Jolly Gipsies, a children’s *Hawaiian* group in Solo. In this performance, broadcast over SRV on 19 November 1938, *Hawaiian* songs, the focus of the program, were interspersed with Javanese gamelan music (*diselingi dengan klenengan*). Or witness the performance (*klenengan*) of Central Javanese gamelan music by the group Mardiwiromo broadcast by VORO on 1 January 1936, which had interpolations of *kroncong* and Melayu songs played (live) by Krontjong Orkest Zevental.

³⁷ As I say, the term *panambih* (meaning “additional” or “a supplement” in Sundanese) only came into use later, but to distinguish the specifically Sundanese *lagu extra* from other less-defined kinds of *lagu extra*, I shall use the term *panambih* before its time.

PLAYLIST 3. Gambus

Gamboes Orkest "Rozen" dipimpin oleh toean Rozen Bahar, dinjanjikan oleh toean A. Salmin. [Gambus Orkest "Rozen," directed by tuan Rozen Bahar, with tuan A. Salmin, singer].
NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 8 May 1938, 23:00-24:00.

Lagoe Pemboeka'an
Rumba Carioca
Achi Ittifaag
Golbie Tamanna
Boewah Tandjoeng (selingan)
Ali Baba Rumba
Lagoe Penoetoep

PLAYLIST 4. Gambus

Gamboes Orkest "Alhambra" dari Batoe dipimpin oleh toean S. Oemar Hamoed Talib, di dalam Studio Nirom, memperdengarkan matjam2 lagoe Arab. [The Gambus Orkest "Alhambra" from Batu, directed by tuan S. Oemar Hamoed Talib, in the NIROM studio, presents a variety of Arabic songs.]
NIROM Oostersche Programma (Soerabaia), 5 January 1938, 20:30-23:00

Iftitah Marsch
Sjarah Arabië "Haman"
Extra Melajoe
Billas Jahabibie
Idhadhaga
Mama
Sjarah Arabië "Holkin"
Extra Melajoe Idjo Idjo

PLAYLIST 5. Tembang Sunda

Ketjapi Orkest "Balebat" dipimpin oleh toean Djoehrie, soeara Nji Mas Djoedjoe. [Kacapi Orkest "Balebat," directed by tuan Djoehrie, with Nji Mas Djoedjoe, vocal.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 7 August 1938, 19:00-21:00

Bajoeboed extra Renggong Gede
Sinom Panangis extra Boengoer
Kentar Adjoen extra Senggot Pelog
Sinom Tjirebonan extra Tjatrik
Oedanmas Karatonan extra Bandjaran Miring
Eros extra Rara-rara kring Panglima
Sinom Satria extra Senggot Ys Lilin
Boebaran

female singers and partly because fixed meter made the songs more accessible, *lagu panambih* were more appealing to the general public than the old-fashioned, unmetered *tembang*, and the gramophone industry favored them for this reason, recording far more *panambih* than *tembang*. On radio, however, *panambih* often appear paired with a *tembang* from the standard repertoire (Playlist 5), or yet more classically, as a pendant to a group of *tembang* (Playlists 6 & 7). That is to say, they are kept within the classical frame and are not allowed to become free-standing, as they often were on records. I interpret this as showing that the support for *tembang Sunda* on radio was mainly conservative, interested in maintaining the genre's prestigious, aristocratic associations, while the gramophone industry simply sought what sold. (It reminds us that radio and gramophone were, as I remarked earlier, different media, with different considerations.)

PLAYLIST 6. Tembang Sunda

Ketjapi Orkest "Sekar Familie" dengan penjanji tembang jang terkenal dari Tjiandjoer Enden Imong, dipimpin oleh toean R. Emoeng Poerawinata. [Kacapi Orkest "Sekar Familie," with the famous tembang singer Enden Imong from Cianjur, directed by tuan R. Emoeng Poerawinata.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 5 July 1938, 20:30-23:30

Tembang dalam soeroepan Pelog:

Pemboeka'an Iagoé Papalajon
Dandanggoela Bajoeboed
Dandanggoela Kentar
Dandanggoela Mangari
Sinom Liwoeng
Sinom Panangis
Sinom Tjirebonan
Extra Renggong Gantjang
Liwoeng Djaja
Djemplang Serang

Tembang dalam soeroepan Sorog:

Sinom Pangrawit
Sinom Satrija
Sinom Kapati-pati
Extra Boengoer
Asmarandana Embat-embat
Asmarandana Karaton
Kinanti Oedanmas
Extra Bandjaran

Papantoenan dalam soeroepan Pelog:

Papatet
Moepoekembang
Radjamantri
Randegan
Sampioeng
Djemplang Penganten
Djemplang Titi
Extra Tjatrik

PLAYLIST 7. Tembang Sunda

Ketjapi Orkest "Rekamaja," dipimpin oleh toean Moehamad Bakri, soeara Nji Moemoen. [Kacapi Orkest "Rekamaya," directed by tuan Moehamad Bakri, with Nji Moemoen, vocal.]
NIROM (Batavia/Bandoeng), 2 September 1938, 19:00-19:45, 20:00-20:30.

Soeroepan Pelog: Papantoenan

Papatet
Randegan
Sampioeng
Djemplang Penganten
Extra Senggot Pelog

Soeroepan Sorog

Sinom Pangrawit
Sinom Satrija
Sinom Kepati-pati
Kinanti Oedanmas
Extra Bandjaran

PLAYLIST 8. Kroncong

Krontjong Orkest "Lief Souvenir" dipimpin oleh Soewardi dibantoe oleh violist Abdul Karim dan penjanji2 Miss X, Deetje, serta Djajasoepeana. [Kroncong Orkest "Lief Souvenir," directed by Suwardi, with Abdul Karim, violin, and the singers Miss X, Deetje, and Djajasoepeana.]
NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 12 May 1938, 20:35-22:00

Marsch Pemboeka'an
Krontjong Slamet Ketemoe (Miss X)
Krontjong Anak Jang Dosa (Soewardi)
Extra: Djali-djali (Miss X)
Extra: Lacucaracha Rumba (Soewardi)
Krontjong Keschatan [sic: Kesehatan?] (Deetje)
Stamboel Passar Malam (Djajasoepeana)
Extra: Persi Roesak (Miss X)
Extra: Ja Toean Ja Njonja (Soewardi)
Extra: Kramat Karem (Miss X)
Krontjong Penghidoepan (Soewardi)
Lagoe Penoeetoe

Turning to the two ubiquitous genres of popular music, *kroncong* and *Hawaiian*, we find—as further examples of the elasticity of genres on radio—that both had by 1938 expanded quite a bit beyond their core repertoires.

Kroncong. Playlist 8 shows a broadcast by the Krontjong Orkest Lief Souvenir, from Batavia. It mixes *kroncong* and *stambul* tunes³⁸ with songs in the general Batavia repertoire (*Djali-djali*, *Persi Roesak*, *Kramat Karem*) available to any popular musicians in Batavia. (The Chinese-Betawi *gambang kromong* ensemble, for example, played all three of these tunes.) Note that although this is nominally a *kroncong* broadcast (since the performing group is called a *krontjong orkest*) only four of the ten named tunes (ignoring the opening and closing signature tunes) are *kroncong*. One other is a *stambul*, and all the rest are *lagu extra*, three of which have, like *kroncong* itself, associations with Batavia. Thus, though the songs themselves are diverse in form and idiom, a Batavian theme pervades the broadcast.

The Melody Band in Surabaya (Playlist 9) offers another heterogeneous program, this one without a localizing theme. Though the group is billed as a *krontjong-orkest* and the broadcast is listed in *Soeara Nirom* as a program of “original [*origineel*, i.e., in this context, old-style] and modern *kroncong* and *stambul* songs,” there are no *stambul* and only two explicit *kroncong* numbers (though some of the other songs may be *kroncong* without saying so in their titles), along with seven songs in English, a nostalgic number harking back to the legendary Portuguese origins of *kroncong* (*Nina Boeboek*), a song associated with the *peranakan* Chinese (*Poekoel Gambang*; Miss Tioe, the Melody Band’s star female singer, was *peranakan*), three songs associated with the Melayu and Minang of Sumatra (*Sirih Koenig*, *Tjik Mamat*,

³⁸ In the context of the 1930s, *stambul* songs can be considered a distinctive sub-repertoire of *kroncong*. See further chapter 5.

Simambang Boekit Tinggie), and one (*Sontolojo*) with a probable East Javanese connection.³⁹

Koesbini (1910-1991), a versatile singer and composer, apparently specialized in songs in languages other than Indonesian, so the prominence of English-language songs here is probably meant to showcase this talent. Other *kroncong* broadcasts by The Melody Band included Koesbini singing in German and Dutch, as well as songs (with other singers) associated with Ambon, Manado, and Bengkulu.

³⁹ An East Javanese gamelan composition with this title was included three times in 1938 in broadcasts of East Javanese gamelan music by NIROM's Surabaya studio gamelan (*klenengan dari Studio Nirom meloeloe gending2 Djawa Timoer*). The song performed by The Melody Band could be musically related to this East Javanese melody (or to the Central Javanese *Ladrang Sontoloyo*, reported to me by Marc Perlman), or it could simply have borrowed the title. Note that in another broadcast by The Melody Band, Koesbini sang *Krontjong Gembala Sontolojo*, which is probably the same song as in Playlist 9, under a different title.

PLAYLIST 9. Kroncong

Krontjong-Orkest "The Melody Band" dipimpin oleh toean-toean Koesbini dan Moechtar di dalam Studio Nirom, memperdengarkan matjam2 lagoe krontjong dan stamboel jang origineel dan modern. [The Kroncong-Orkest "The Melody Band," directed by tuan Koesbini and tuan Moechtar in the NIROM studio, presents a variety of kroncong and stambul songs, both old-style and modern.] [Note: the singers are Koesbini and Miss Tioe.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Soerabaia), 9 January 1938, 20:30-23:00

Lagoe Pemboeka'an
Serenade (Miss Tioe)
Nanking Rumba (Koesbini)
Kiss Me Goodnight (Koesbini)
Goodnight Marie (Koesbini)
Krontjong Prempoean Sedjati (Miss Tioe)
Krontjong Oh, Manoesia (Koesbini)
Poekoel Gambang Poekoel Piano (Miss Tioe)
Nina Boeboek (Koesbini)
Sinar Mataharie (Miss Tioe)
Sorga Doenia (Koesbini)
Melihat Sambil Tersenjoem (Miss Tioe)
Sontolojo (Koesbini)
There's Something in the Air (Koesbini)
Will You Remember Sweetheart (Koesbini)
Boenga Tjempaka (Miss Tioe)
Blue Moon (Koesbini)
Tjik Mamat (Miss Tioe)
Ramboet Item Matanja Galak (Koesbini)
Sirih Koning (Miss Tioe)
Simambang Boekit Tinggie (Koesbini)
Shanghai Night (Koesbini)
Let's Yourself Go [sic] (Koesbini)
Menglipoer Hati (Miss Tioe)
Penoetoep

PLAYLIST 10. Kroncong

"Terang Boelan" - speciaal kroncong programma dimainkan oleh "Lief Java" dipimpin oleh Hugo Dumas dan dibantoe oleh Miss Rukyah [=Roekiah] dan lain-lain penjanji jang terkenal.

[*Terang Bulan*—a special *kroncong* program played by "Lief Java," directed by Hugo Dumas, with Miss Rukyah and other well-known singers.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 13 June 1938, 21:30-24:00

Marsh [sic] Pemboeka'an
Terang Boelan (Miss Rukyah) [=Roekiah]
Poelau Djawa (Ismail dan Koor)
Bungah Mawar (Miss Rukyah)
Peking Diwaktoe Malam (Louis Koch)
Djali-djali (Jan Boen)
Bergirang Hati (Miss Rukyah)
Duduk Termenung Ditepi Laut (Miss Rukyah)
La Cumparsita (Instrumental)
Kota Silindoeng Tjantik (Zahirdan)
Persi Roesak (Miss Rukyah)
Fatimah! Gadys Desa (Miss Rukyah)
Stamboel "Poespa Warna" (Louis Koch)
Danau Toba (Ismail)
Waktu Makan (Miss Rukyah)
Menyesal (Miss Rukyah)
Kroncong Boenga Melati (Louis Koch)
Sri Landak (Extra Malay Turn) (Koor)
Gelombang Laut (Miss Rukyah)
Selamat Malam

Playlist 10 shows a third *kroncong* broadcast, this one by the then very well-known Batavia group Lief Java, here with a guest singer, Miss Roekiah, a recording star particularly famous in 1938 because of her leading role in the first Indonesian-language hit movie, *Terang Boelan*, whose title song she sings in the broadcast. We find Betawi songs, Sumatran songs (*Kota Silindoeng Tjantik*, *Danau Toba*, *Sri Landak*), a Chinese reference (*Peking Diwaktoe Malam*), a Javanese reference (*Poelau Djawa*), and the bare minimum of *stambul* and *kroncong* (one each). No songs in English, this band having a film star but no Koesbini.



„Lief Java” Afdeeling Krontjong.



Lief Java „Jazz-afdeeling” in actie.

Figure 4.2. Two illustrations from the VORO first anniversary book, 1936. Lief Java's *kroncong* and jazz divisions.

What is being conveyed here? Lief Souvenir, calling itself a *krontjong orkest*, treats *kroncong* as an element of Batavian music, not as a self-limiting genre. The other two groups, while still claiming to be *kroncong* ensembles or to offer programs of *kroncong* and *stambul*, also travel far outside the formal constraints of those genres, and at the same time they strive to expand their nominal *kroncong* into a pan-Indonesian popular music—not by presenting actual melodies in local performance-styles from across the country, but by adapting and arranging melodies in the string-band idiom (inevitably using Western tunings and harmonies), or, when that is unfeasible because the melodies resist adaptation, by avoiding musical references and instead simply *mentioning* regions and ethnicities in the lyrics of the songs. Koesbini’s Melody Band makes a further effort to connect this expanded *kroncong* to international popular music.

Hawaiian. Again we have an expanded genre: while *Hawaiian* broadcasts always contain songs with Hawaiian or South Seas reference (*I’d Like to See Samoa of Samoa, Just Say Aloha*), they also include popular and light jazz tunes. (Playlists 11 & 12.) But *never* does a *Hawaiian* program include a *kroncong*, or indeed any song in Indonesian; and neither do *kroncong* programs include *Hawaiian* songs. This is quite striking, considering the near-identity of the instrumentation for *kroncong* and *Hawaiian*. One might think the distinction between the genres was racial, but both *kroncong* and *Hawaiian* ensembles included the same mix of Eurasian, *peranakan* Chinese, and *pribumi* performers. The most plausible explanation is that the genres were kept distinct in language and repertoire because of the audiences they were expected to reach: *Hawaiian*, sung in English (or Hawaiian), was aimed at an audience oriented to the wider world outside Indonesia, while *kroncong* focused either narrowly on Batavia (e.g.

PLAYLIST 11. Hawaiian

Siaran dari Studio Nirom di Soerabaia, memperdengarkan lagoe2 Hawaiian dimainkan oleh The Twilight Minstrels. [A broadcast from the NIROM studio in Surabaya, presenting Hawaiian songs played by The Twilight Minstrels.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Soerabaia), 13 January 1938, 21:00-23:00

There's a Star in the Sky
Time on My Hands
Violeta
Underneath the Palms
Where Are You
Pretty Red Hibiscus
Over Somebody Else Shoulder [sic]
Dinah
Let's Start Our Love Anew
I Wish I Were Twins
Just Say "Aloha"
Basin Sheet Blues [sic!]
Apple Blossom Time
So Nice
I'd Rather Be a Beggar with You

PLAYLIST 12. Hawaiian

Hawaiian Orkest "The Twilight Minstrels" dipimpin oleh toean Tan Hong Djwan di dalam Studio Nirom, memperdengarkan matjam2 lagoe Hawaiian. [Hawaiian Orkest "The Twilight Minstrels," directed by tuan Tan Hong Djwan in the NIROM studio, presents a variety of Hawaiian songs.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Soerabaia), 4 August 1938, 21:00-23:00

I'd Like to See Samoa of Samoa
Honolulu Hula Hula Heigh
O Mine Ha Ha [=Minnehaha?]
Harbor Light
Love and Learn
Little Heaven of the Seventh Seas [sic]
Toodle-oo
Moon or Moon [sic]
Sentimental Gentlemen from Georgia
China Sea
Is It True What they Say about Dixie
A Night by the Ocean

Playlist 8) or more broadly on Indonesia (Playlists 9 and 10). Koesbini evidently tried to widen *kroncong*'s focus to include European/American popular music as well (as in Playlist 9), but such songs were folded into a predominantly Indonesian context, whereas *Hawaiian* broadcasts simply eliminated Indonesia from the discourse.⁴⁰

4.2. *In the air*

A public medium necessarily takes a stance on public issues, if only by remaining silent about them. In this second section I consider what radio and radio music had to say or show about two of the central issues of the DEI in the late 1930s: the unity or disunity—racial, ethnic, and political—of colonial society; and the nature and impact of modernity.⁴¹

East vs. West

In March 1939, the prominent Indonesian nationalist Hadji Agoes Salim published a two-part essay titled “Radio dan masyarakat” (“Radio and society”) in the Medan newspaper *Sinar*

⁴⁰ By 1940 this had changed, and some groups performed *Hawaiian* songs with lyrics in Indonesian. The earliest instance I have seen so far of this subgenre, called *langgam Hawaii* or *langgam Hawaiian*, is a NIROM broadcast on 9 February 1940. A comment, interesting both for its essentialism and for its view of what popular music can do, is found in *Soeara-Nirom* 1940g: “Hawaiian songs and Hawaiian guitar are very popular these days—not only the lovely instrumental music but also the songs in English and Hawaiian. Hawaiian music opens a road for our young people to advance by way of music and singing. Not only young men, but also our young women now have the courage to come forward without fear or shame. *Because they are Eastern, Hawaiian songs are very accessible, and they are also easily made suitable to conditions in our country.* Now the songs called langgam Hawaii have emerged, which are Hawaiian songs and music but with singing in our language here” (emphasis added).

The Indonesian text: “Lagoe dan guitaar Hawaii sekarang sangat popoeler sekali djadinja, sehingga boekan sadja digemari orang moesiknja jang indah itoe, melainkan djoega boeah lagoenja didalam bahasa Inggeris dan Hawaii. Teroetama lagoe Hawaii itoe memboekakan djalan kepada pemoeda kita oentoek mentjari kemadjoean didalam moesik dan bernjanji, boekan sadja bagian pemoeda, poen pemoedi kita soedah berani tampil kemoeka dengan tidak oesah gentar dan maloe lagi. Karena lagoe Timoer, maka lagoe Hawaii itoe moedah benar diterima, dan moedah poela disoesoaikan kepada keadaan dinegeri kita ini. Demikianlah lahir lagoe langgam Hawaii itoe, jaitoe lagoe dan moesiknja menoeroet langgam Hawaii sedang boeah njanjinja bahasa kita disini.”

⁴¹ This second half of the present chapter is no longer restricted to 1938.

Deli.⁴² In the first part of the essay, “Pertjeraian Bangsa” (“Separation of peoples”), Salim criticizes NIROM for failing to implement radio’s potential to bridge the gap between Indonesians and the Dutch. He writes:

In virtually every government office and every business, various peoples meet and mix, especially Dutch and Indonesians. This is also the case in nearly every school. But outside of official business, association [*pergaoelan*] between Easterners and Westerners, especially Dutch and Indonesians, rarely—in fact, one may say, never—takes place. The two peoples deliberately distance themselves from each other. The Dutch do not want to mix freely with the Indonesians, seeming to feel that they will be lowered by the association; and the Indonesians avoid contact with the Dutch in order to protect themselves from opinions and behavior they feel are insulting. Although more and more Indonesians have “Western” education and hold “Western” rank and position, this has not decreased the separation, which has instead grown more rigid, perhaps fueled by competition.⁴³

Such apartness, Salim says, is dangerous and runs counter to the ideals of human well-being and progress (*hadjat kemanoesiaan dan kemadjoean*). Thus it distresses him to see that while NIROM’s Oostersche Programma broadcasts the songs of Indonesians, Chinese, Indians, Malays, Arabs, and also (like the Westersche Programma) songs in English, Hawaiian, and Maori,

evidently the Dutch language is forbidden [*pantangan*] for Eastern broadcasting, and songs in Indonesian are forbidden for Western broadcasting. And the music and Western songs called classical seem also to be forbidden for NIROM’s Eastern

⁴² Salim 1939. Part 1, “Pertjeraian bangsa,” was published in *Sinar Deli* on 23 March 1939, and Part 2, “Pertjeraian golongan,” on 28 March 1939. “Pertjeraian bangsa” was later republished in the Surakarta newspaper *Darmo-Kondo* over two days (11-12 April 1939), but I could not find “Pertjeraian golongan” in that paper.

⁴³ “Dalam tiap2 pedjabatan dan tiap2 peroesahaan pemerintah atau pertikoelir hampir rata2 bertemoetjampoeran berbagai bagai bangsa, teroetama bangsa Belanda dan bangsa Indonesia. [*Paragraph*] Demikian djoega hampir dalam tiap2 sekolah. [*Paragraph*] Tapi soenggoehpoen begitoe pergaoelan antara bangsa Timoer dan Barat teroetama antara bangsa Belanda dan bangsa Indonesia, diloear oeroesan djabatan (officieel) hampir, malah boleh dikatakan sekali kali, tidak ada. Dengan sengadja doea pihak itoe mengasingkan diri antara satoe dgn lain. Bangsa Belanda tidak maoe ketjampoeran ‘anak negeri’, dalam pergaoelan merdeka, seolah olah koeatir akan mendjadikan rendah pergaoelannya djika ketjampoeran. Maka dgn sendirinja bangsa Indonesia mengasingkan diri soepaja terpelihara dari pada anggapan dan perlakoean jg dirasakannya sebagai perhinaan. Dengan bertambah banjaknya bangsa Indonesia jg berpeladjaran ‘Barat’ dan mendoedoeki pangkat dan djabatan ‘Barat’, boekanlah bertambah koerang pisahan itoe, malah bertambah keras. Seolah olah ditambah keras oleh nafsoe persaingan!” (Salim 1939.) The abbreviations *dgn* and *jg* are in the published text.

broadcasting. . . . With this policy, NIROM, a halfway official body, becomes as it were propaganda for and a demonstration of the separation of peoples, with the approval of the ruling power.⁴⁴

Salim praises VORO, the private *ketimuran* station in Batavia, for broadcasting some Dutch-language programs. This is appropriate, he says, given that thousands of Indonesians understand and indeed speak Dutch (particularly, he could have added, in the kinds of families that could afford radios).

This is a curiously one-sided attack. In the first place, it is not quite fair: the Oostersche Programma did (as Salim acknowledges) broadcast its Padvinders (scouting) program in Dutch (spoken by an Indonesian broadcaster); it also, to celebrate the birthdays of the royal family or the anniversary of the Queen's succession to the throne, broadcast programs with Dutch-language songs "especially for those of the Orange group,"⁴⁵ and from time to time *kroncong* with Dutch titles were included on *kroncong* playlists even when there was no special occasion.⁴⁶ (But aside from these few contexts, Salim is right that the Dutch are barely present in the Oostersche Programma.)

Secondly, why does he lash out at the Oostersche Programma like this yet skim lightly over the Westersche Programma? Judging from my two Westersche surveys (Table 4.4 in the Appendix and the mini-survey for May 1938; admittedly these are less thorough than the full-

⁴⁴ "Hanja roepanja basa Belanda mendjadi pantangan oentoek siaran Timoer, sebagai djoega lagoe2 dan njanjian basa Indonesia mendjadi pantangan oentoek siaran Baratnja. Begitoe poela lagoe2 moesik dan njanjian Barat jg dinamakan klassiek seolah2 mendjadi pantangan poela oentoek siaran Timoer Nirom. . . . Dengan lakoe jg demikian itoe, Nirom jg bersifat setengah djabatan seolah2 mendjadi propaganda dan demonstratie pisahan bangsa dgn kebenaran dari pihak kekoeasaan" (ibid.).

⁴⁵ In 1938, these songs included the anthems *Wilhelmus* and *Wien Neerlandsch bloed*, and various popular tunes: *Zandvoort*, *Draaien Draaien*, *Ik Hou van Holland*, *Zilver Tusschen 't Goud*, *Je Hebt een Hart van Goud*, *Van Je Heidel Doedel Dee*, *Hei Hei Meisjelief*, *Omdat Ik Zooveel van Je Hou*, and *Het Meisje van de Overhaal*.

⁴⁶ I am not certain that the lyrics of these songs were in Dutch, though the titles were. Some of these titles from 1938 broadcasts are: *Krontjong Tanah Abang bij Nacht*, *Krontjong Nirom bij Nacht*, *Krontjong Java bij Nacht*, *Krontjong Parijs van Java*, *Krontjong Melati van Java*, *Krontjong Het Zevental*, *Krontjong De Bliksem*, *Krontjong De Regenboog*, etc.

year Oostersche survey summarized in Table 4.5 in the Appendix), *nothing* from Indonesia, words or music, was broadcast on the Western Programme. NIROM operated on the premise that Dutch listeners wanted nothing but European music, and Asian listeners wanted nothing but Asian music.⁴⁷

But was this premise true? “Pertjeraan golongan” (“Separation of groups”), the second part of Hadji Agoes Salim’s 1939 essay, concerns social rather than racial divisions in the DEI. The only people who have radios, he writes, are those who can afford to buy the machines and pay for the license and the electricity—“a very thin stratum of society.” Even high government officials (*ambtenar2 sampai pangkat kontrolir jg mengepalai pemerintahan negeri*) say they cannot afford radios, so certainly the mass of ordinary people (whom he calls *rakjat ramai* and *lapisan tengah dan lapisan sibanjak daripada rakjat anak negeri*) cannot. This is surely correct; but if only the wealthy could afford radios, is it likely that those Asians among them (some 40,000 in 1938, according to Table 4.2), many with enough wealth and privilege to afford Western education and Western interests, listened only to Asian music? Or consider the 45,000 Europeans who held radio licenses at the end of 1939: Witte points out (1998:125) that 28,000 of them were actually Eurasians with European status,⁴⁸ and, as I remarked earlier, Eurasians had one foot in each camp. Undoubtedly many of them were listening to both Western and Eastern music.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Recall the justification NIROM offered for establishing its separate Oostersche Programma, quoted earlier (see footnote 16): “Eastern music is not much liked by the European public, just as the Indonesian public does not much like European music.” “Not much liked” sounds to me like a faint-hearted way of saying “rejected.”

⁴⁸ For the reason discussed in footnote 22, Witte presents this figure in reference to 1940 rather than 1939.

⁴⁹ In August 1967, the *Djakarta Times* published an article describing *kroncong* as “typically Indonesian.” The article was later translated into Dutch and published in *Tong Tong*, a magazine aimed at “Indos” (Eurasians) living in Holland (“Krontjong: een manifestatie”). The translation was accompanied by an anonymous editorial comment (probably by Tjalie Robinson) remarking (disapprovingly) on the furious reaction of some Eurasians that “*kroncong*

Anyone could turn the dial from west to east and back again. Indeed, while *De N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* contained detailed schedules of two weeks of Westersche broadcasting, and *Soeara Nirom* contained equally detailed listings for Oostersche broadcasting, each also provided a one-page summary of the other programme's schedule for those two weeks. An invitation, perhaps. And a listener who wanted to pay the money could subscribe to either program guide, or both.⁵⁰

One further instance of modest—but not nonexistent—crossover. In April 1936, *De Nirom-Bode* published the results of a poll taken earlier that year (*Nirom-Bode* 1936). NIROM had held an election for a board of advisers, and it asked all who voted in that election, 5,884 listeners, which programme they preferred to listen to, the Westersche or the Oostersche. Then, on the basis of the listeners' names, NIROM sorted the responses into three categories: Europeans, Natives, and Chinese. The results are shown in Table 4.3. It is probably no surprise that some 98% of the Europeans preferred the Western programme, and not much of one that 93% of the Indonesians preferred the Eastern programme—though the 2% of Europeans and 7% of Indonesians listening against type are of interest. The surprise is among the Chinese, 30% of whom chose the Western programme and 70% the Eastern.

So there is considerable likelihood, and some evidence, of listening across racial boundaries. In the *discourse* of Indies radio, however, everyone stays in his or her box. We

is NOT Indonesian, it comes from us!" (*Krontjong is NIET Indonesisch, maar "van ons."*) Recall that *kroncong* did not appear at all in NIROM's Westersche Programma—but clearly it had listeners who were classified as Europeans.

⁵⁰ The guides did not come free with the license fee. In 1937, a subscription to *Soeara Nirom* cost an additional f0.25 a month.

		EUROPEANS	PRIBUMI ("Natives")	CHINESE & Other Asiatics	TOTAL
1	# of respondents to NIROM questionnaire	?	?	?	5,884
2	% of NIROM respondents (line 1) preferring Westersche Programma	98.1%	6.6%	30.5%	
3	% of NIROM respondents (line 1) preferring Oostersche Programma	1.9%	93.4%	69.5%	
4	# of radio license holders – end 1935	19,020	4,411	4,135	27,566
5	% of total # of license holders (line 4)	69%	16%	15%	100%
6	Putative # of all license holders preferring Westersche Programma (applying % in line 2 to # in line 4)	18,659	291	1,261	20,211 (73.3% of line 4 total)
7	Putative # of all license holders preferring Oostersche Programma (applying % in line 3 to # in line 4)	361	4,120	2,874	7,355 (26.7% of line 4 total)

Table 4.3. Results of 1936 NIROM questionnaire regarding listener preferences for Westersche or Oostersche Programma. Sources: Lines 1 & 2: *Nirom-Bode* 1936; line 4: *Indisch verslag*, part 2, for 1938 (published 1939). Other lines extrapolated from Lines 1, 2, & 4.

have seen this already in the east/west opposition that justified the creation of the Oostersche Programma; but it was strong also in *ketimuran* rhetoric. For example:

The broadcasting of Eastern music now is far from satisfactory. Radio listeners are stuffed full of Western music, which is obviously not enjoyed by Chinese, Arabs, or Indonesians.⁵¹

Similarly, most of the rationales offered for the formation of the Federation of Eastern Broadcasters (PPRK) are essentialized expressions of the box mentality:⁵²

⁵¹ "Sekarang sadja penjiaran lagoe-lagoe Timoer soeda djaoeh dari memoeasken. Pendenger-pendenger radio terlaloe banjak didjedjel dengan lagoe-lagoe Barat, jang tentoe sekali ada tida menjotjokin bangsa Tionghoa, Arab atawa Indonesiers" (*Pewarta Soerabaia* 1938b).

⁵² It is striking how few serious arguments were advanced for *why* PPRK should control *ketimuran* broadcasting. When Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo first proposed PPRK to the Volksraad (Soetardjo 1936), he at least offered a pragmatic rationale. He argued that since NIROM had been dependent on the private *ketimuran* stations for its

Eastern broadcasting should be managed by Eastern people, because the music of the East can definitely be accepted and will definitely be satisfactory if they manage it themselves.⁵³

The goal of PPRK is generally known to be that the variety [of *ketimuran* broadcasting?] and [its?] suitability to the Eastern soul should be held and managed by Eastern people themselves as much as possible.⁵⁴

So that *ketimuran* broadcasting can satisfy and fulfill the desires and needs of *ketimuran* listeners, its programming and broadcasting have been turned over to PPRK.⁵⁵

The essentialist assumption is that precisely because NIROM's Oostersche programming was not run *by* Asians it could never be acceptable *to* Asians. In this regard it is interesting to note that when PPRK finally did take over *ketimuran* broadcasting (in November 1940), listeners complained that it should have brought NIROM's star performers with it. In an article bluntly titled "Why are PPRK's broadcasts bad?", the director of PPRK, Soetardjo, is reported as saying in PPRK's defense that NIROM had tied up its star performers in contracts prohibiting them from working for anyone else, and also that NIROM had reneged on a promise to transfer its entire *ketimuran* staff to PPRK.⁵⁶ Thus he defends PPRK, which was expected to be by nature

Eastern programming, once it cut its ties with them (as it intended to do at the start of 1937), it would have no good *ketimuran* material to broadcast. Therefore, he proposed, the government should support a federation of the *ketimuran* broadcasters themselves, independent of NIROM, since they already knew how to do it and could ensure that good *ketimuran* programming remained on the air. On 16 August 1938 the Volksraad approved the transfer of *ketimuran* broadcasting from NIROM to PPRK. Once approval was won, there was no longer a question of why PPRK should take over, only a question of when, so justifications did not need to be cogent.

⁵³ "Seantero omroep katimoeran bisa dioeroes sendiri oleh orang-orang Timoer. Ini ada beralesan atas timbangan bahoea muzieknya katimoeran tentoe aken bisa disetoedjoei dan tentoe aken memoeaskan dioeroes oleh orang Timoer sendiri" (*Pewarta Soerabaia* 1938a).

⁵⁴ "Toedjoeannya P.P.R.K. poen oemoem ketahoein, bahoea memang soeda samoestinja kerageman dan katjotjokan pada batin Timoer dipegang dan dioeroes sendiri sabisa-bisanja" (*Pewarta Soerabaia* 1940c).

⁵⁵ "Agar soepaja siaran radio Ketimoeran dapet memoeaskan dan memenoehi keinginan keboetoehan pendengar Ketimoeran, maka penjelenggaraan programma dan penjiarannya diserahkan kepada PPRK" (*Persamaan* 1940).

⁵⁶ "Kenapa penjiaran P.P.R.K. djelek" (*Pewarta Soerabaia* 1940a). A few days afterwards, two of NIROM's key performers—Koesbini, by then the director of the Surabaya studio's house orchestra, and R. Soekarno, the group's principal male singer—published a refutation, denying that they were bound by any contract to NIROM (*Pewarta*

better than NIROM, by saying PPRK's problem is it doesn't have NIROM's artists and staff.⁵⁷ The rhetoric of essentialism prevented people from recognizing that PPRK was simply adopting NIROM's broadcast models and practice.

East vs. East

Ketimuran radio—particularly NIROM—was acutely concerned with balance and proportion. In the remarkable essay “Taman boenga Nirom” (“NIROM's flower garden”), published in *Soeara-Nirom* in April 1940, fully three-quarters of the text is devoted to an extended metaphor depicting NIROM's Oostersche Programma as a garden of flowers: the various Indonesian and Asian arts are the flowers and NIROM is the gardener, whose task it is to ensure that one species does not overshadow another or crowd it out, and to coordinate the colors to make a pleasing overall view (*pemandangan jang sedap daripada segenapnja*).

Every plant and kind of flower needs its own plot of land and its own kind of nurturing, so as to prosper; every kind of art that comes before the microphone needs a time for broadcast and reception that is coordinated with the others, so its beauty can shine out That is why all of these beautiful flowers have been turned over to NIROM to be arranged in a design, so the neat and handsome garden of radio broadcasting can satisfy and delight all the groups of listeners who wish to enjoy the beauty of NIROM's garden.⁵⁸

Soerabaia 1940b). The reason they were not performing for PPRK, according to Soekarno, was that PPRK had opened discussions with them but then let the matter drop.

⁵⁷ However questionable Soetardjo's replies, note that the attacks on PPRK began less than a month after its first broadcasts, which seems unsporting.

⁵⁸ “Tiap toemboehan-toemboehan dan bangsa boenga itoe menghendaki tanah jang lain, pemeliharaan jang lain, soepaja dapat soeboer hidoepnja; tiap-tiap oesaha dimoeka microphoon, tiap-tiap boeah kesenian jang dinjatakan didepan microphoon itoe menghendaki waktoe penjiaran dan waktoe penerimaan jang selaras, soepaja terkemoekalah keindahannja. . . . Maka segala boenga-boengaan jang indah dan molek itoe terserah kepada Nirom oentoek menjoesoen karangannja, soepaja taman siaran-radio jang teratoer rapi dan bagoes itoe dapat memenoehi kehendak segala golongan pendengar, jaitoe penjadap keindahan taman Nirom, dan memoeaskan hatinja sedapat-dapatnja” (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940d).

NIROM has to take care that each art has sufficient time before the microphone, and also that adding a new art to the roster does not reduce the time for others. For this reason NIROM often has to reject, with regret, the requests of listeners who ask that the broadcast time for their favorite art be extended.

Another difficulty lies in choosing the artists. There are many kinds of orchid, with many different colors, and therefore it is not visitors to the garden, but the professional gardener who should do the planting. On the basis of his experience, and with expert advice, he must decide which flower should be planted and where it should be placed, so the beauty of the whole garden is not diminished (*terganggoe*, “disturbed”). Thus NIROM—taking into account the different and sometimes opposed interests of various social groups—has been given the responsibility to organize the many arts into a general programme for Eastern Broadcasting.

Sometimes it happens that one or another performing group thinks it has the *right* to appear in a certain position in the programme, and therefore it circulates a petition among listeners to strengthen its claim. But this is as though the flowers told the gardener where they should go in the garden, without regard for the overall design. Our readers will surely agree it is the gardener, namely NIROM, who must decide the place of each flower.⁵⁹

Published six months before the looming takeover of *siaran ketimuran* by PPRK, “Taman boenga NIROM” obviously presents NIROM’s justification of its operations over the previous six years. What it doesn’t say is that the principles had never worked: the flowers were constantly

⁵⁹ “Ada kalanja kita lihat, bahwa sesoeatoe orkest menjangka *berhak* mendoedoeki soeatoe tempat jang tertentoe didalam programma, dan didalam permintaannya akan hak jang tersangka itoe orkest itoe menjangka poela lebih landjoet, bahwa permintaan itoe mesti dikoeatkan dengan daftar tanda tangan jang dikoempoelkan dengan soesah-pajahnja. Boekankah jang seperti ini seakan-akan boengalah jang memberi atoeran kepada si toekang-taman tentang tempatnja didalam taman besar itoe, dengan tidak mengingatkan soesoenan segenapnja? Pambatja kita tentoe mengerti, bahwa si toekang-tamanlah, jaitoe Nirom, jang mesti menentoekan tempat segala matjam boenga jang telah sedia” (*ibid.*).

telling the gardener what to do. Listeners in North Sumatra requested that NIROM broadcast more Melayu music and less Javanese.⁶⁰ In Surabaya they said Central Javanese court gamelan is too elevated to serve for relaxation and they much preferred the lighter East Javanese gamelan broadcasts.⁶¹ Chinese listeners in Surabaya complained that NIROM's broadcasting to the Chinese was far from satisfactory and would remain so since there were no Chinese working for NIROM; the only solution was for NIROM to set up a new transmitter and initiate an all-Chinese programme staffed by Chinese.⁶² (Essentialism again.) Not to be outdone, an Arab-Indonesian member of the Volksraad called for a separate Arabic-language programme.⁶³

These are all instances of identity politics, the box principle at work. And it hardly ended with the handover. In June 1941, well into the PPRK era, Chinese listeners in Bandung complained that broadcasting aimed at Chinese listeners had decreased by 50%. They formed a committee to improve (*perbaekin*) PPRK's broadcasting by adding more Chinese programs. In response, *pribumi* listeners formed their own committee to "defend" (*membela*) PPRK. The newspaper article reporting this (in a paper with a large Chinese readership) remarked that the Chinese committee was not "anti-PPRK" (*tida bersifat anti*), it was simply offering suggestions for improvement, and the author hoped the misunderstanding would not lead to conflict between the races (*Pewartar Soerabaia* 1941b).

The radio stations themselves accepted the box principle. VORO states it succinctly:

⁶⁰ *Soeara Nirom* 1937d.

⁶¹ "Vorstenlandsche gamelan wordt door velen te hoog geacht voor ontspanningsmuziek. De gamelan-uitzendingen uit Soerabaja, welke gemakkelijker worden begrepen, genieten daarom een zekere voorkeur" (*Nirom-Bode* 1937).

⁶² *Soeara 'Oemoem* 1939. The new transmitter should be called NIROM III, in line with the Westersche transmitter NIROM I and the Oostersche transmitter NIROM II.

⁶³ Bafagih 1940. The Volksraad member was named Al-Djoeffry.

It is inevitably the case that the Chinese want to hear Chinese music, the Arabs want to hear Arab music, the Javanese Javanese music, and so forth. Every group wants its own music.⁶⁴

NIROM's version:

Melayu listeners in Sumatra certainly, we feel, prefer Melayu music and *kroncong* to Sundanese gamelan. And Sundanese listeners value *kroncong* higher than Javanese gamelan, Javanese listeners value *kroncong* and Melayu music more than Sundanese *wayang golek*, and so forth. If we broadcast Javanese gamelan, our Sundanese and Melayu listeners will say, "Don't play too much Javanese music, because we don't understand it." And if we broadcast *wayang golek* from Sunda, the Javanese listeners will say, "Don't play too much Sundanese music, because we don't understand it at all." And so forth. But in fact we *must* play all those kinds of music, because, as we all know, listeners to NIROM *ketimuran* consist of so many groups, whose wishes must be satisfied, even though it is not easy to do so.⁶⁵

As with the east/west opposition, we cannot know whether listeners went exploring into other people's music, but we can see that the radio programmers believed they did not. (This is also evident from Table 4.5, which shows that East Javanese music was only broadcast to East Java, West Javanese music only to West Java, and Sumatran music only to Sumatra and Batavia, and a little bit to Surabaya. Central Javanese music was broadcast on all the stations, but the Javanese were everywhere, constituting 45% of the *pribumi* population of the entire colony.)⁶⁶ And, just as in the radio programming, the rhetoric of identity politics also made no allowance for crossover.

⁶⁴ "Soedah seharoesnja, bahwa bangsa Tiong Hwa soeka mendengar lagoe Tiong Hwa, bangsa Arab lagoe Arab, bangsa Djawa lagoe Djawa dan begitoe selandjoetnja. Masing-masing golongan soeka pada lagoe-lagoenja sendiri" (Pewarta V.O.R.O. 1937d).

⁶⁵ Soeara Nirom 1937c. The original text of the last sentence is: "Tetapi toch kami MOESTI memperdengarkan lagoe-lagoe terseboet, sebab sebagai diketahoei, pendengar-pendengar dari Nirom ketimoeran terdiri dari begitoe banjak golongan bangsa timoer, kemaoean siapa semoeanja haroes dipenoehi, sedangkan pekerdjaän jang demikian itoe, sebagai dapat diketahoei tidak moedah."

⁶⁶ Incidentally, Table 4.5 undercuts Wiryawan's claims (2011:139-143) that SRV aimed not only at lovers of Javanese culture but at all who cared for "Eastern culture" (*budaya Ketimuran*), and that its broadcasting of "all Eastern arts" (*segala kesenian Timur*) demonstrates that SRV was "national" in its content and "strongly nationalist" in its political leanings. In fact, apart from what I call the national popular genres (*kroncong*, *Hawaiian*, *gambus*, and *harmonium*), SRV in 1938 broadcast live performances of only three kinds of "Eastern arts": Balinese

The idea of Indonesia

So far, this investigation of radio's power to promote unity or disunity has all been about disunity. The unity comes from the prevalent forms of popular music: *kroncong* and *Hawaiian*, heard frequently on all the stations, and *orkes gambus* and *orkes harmonium*, somewhat less frequent but still widespread.

In an influential article (1986), Tsuchiya Kenji proposes that *kroncong*—because of its supposed origins in the music of Portuguese slaves and subsequent adoption by Eurasians and Indonesian seamen and the *stambul* theater, itself dominated by Eurasians—belongs to no particular culture but is inherently mestizo, and moreover that it “stirs up feelings of melancholy and nostalgia in the hearts of its listeners that embod[y] neatly [the] amorphous ‘mestizo’ situation in 19th-century Java.” He goes on to say that *kroncong* on the radio “made even deeper inroads in Javanese society and [was] often combined with the melody of native Javanese music.”⁶⁷

Tsuchiya's main topic is Raden Adjeng Kartini, and I am in no position to dispute his conclusions about her. But I think he has *kroncong* all wrong. *Kroncong* was not on the whole

janger three times, Chinese music (or events with music) 20 times—and Central Javanese gamelan music or theater with gamelan accompaniment 663 times. In its live programming SRV was thoroughly Java-centric. What acknowledgment there is of the DEI's cultural diversity and of ethnic groups other than Javanese—or even of Javanese other than those in Central Java—comes entirely from commercial gramophone records, which were available to and broadcast on all radio stations. It is not a criticism of SRV that it favored its home culture; but claims that it carried out a nation-building mission to acknowledge “all Eastern arts” will not stand up.

⁶⁷ The one melody? Tsuchiya is probably thinking of *langgam jawa*, a genre using the instrumentation of *kroncong* but whose hundreds of melodies were in a scale approximating the *pelog* tuning of Javanese gamelan music—but *langgam jawa* did not emerge until the 1950s. There was, however, a now-obscure 1930s precursor of *langgam jawa* known as *kembang kacang*, using *kroncong* instrumentation and a quasi-*pelog* scale. I have seen no indication that the genre had a presence on radio or gramophone records before the war, though a tune with the title *Kembang Katjang* is included in some *kroncong* broadcasts.

melancholy.⁶⁸ Rather it was, up until about 1920, an up-tempo, melodically limited vehicle for banter in the *pantun* verse-form; and after that it was most likely to be romantic, cheery, or mood-neutral. It was not the music of no culture, it was by the end of the nineteenth century the urban folk music of Batavia, and from there it entered the musical repertoire of the *stambul* theater. Nobody really knows what *kroncong* was *before* the 1880s, but by that time, when it begins to surface in the historical record, it was very much the music of one specific group, the Eurasians of Batavia, and perhaps also the *peranakan* Chinese. And from the 1920s on it became a *popular* music, disseminated to cities everywhere in the DEI on gramophone records and radio. For reasons I explore in chapter 5, over the course of the 1930s *kroncong* became increasingly Westernized, abandoning both its characteristic accompaniment idiom and the traditional *pantun* stanza-form of its lyrics and instead adopting dance-band arrangements (rumba, tango, foxtrot, waltz).

It is going much too far to imply—as one would have to do in order to reconcile my view with Tsuchiya’s—that popular music is ipso facto mestizo. Popular music often *crosses* boundaries—of geography and culture, perhaps, to unite people by generation rather than by ethnicity—but it does not *erase* those boundaries. That is what the formidable presence of *gamelan*, *tembang Sunda*, *wayang*, *macapat*, *ludruk*, and *kethoprak* on the radio in 1938 shows us: the boundaries were there; the Javanese desire to hear Javanese *gamelan* and *wayang kulit* and *kethoprak*, the Sundanese desire to hear *tembang Sunda* and *wayang golek* had not eroded. *Kroncong*, precisely because it was sung in the lingua franca and was not linked to a

⁶⁸ There was one infrequently played minor-key melody, *Kroncong Bandan*, that was reserved for laments of the poor-me variety; and occasionally other *kroncong* melodies would be used for love-sick lyrics, but these cannot justify a characterization of the whole genre as melancholy. Neither can Tsuchiya’s melancholy be located in *kembang kacang* (if he knew about it at all). Koesbini ([=Kusbini] 1972:34) reports that *kembang kacang* was happy and was interspersed with humor (*gembira*, *berseling humor*).

specific region or ethnicity, may well have offered a relief from the confinements of cultures, a vision of a wider world; but it did not miscegenate genres.

What it did, rather, was to place within a Western instrumentation and an increasingly Western musical idiom lyrics relating to Indonesian life and sung in the Indonesian lingua franca. *Hawaiian* went further in the same direction: with lyrics in English (or Hawaiian) and, again, a foreign musical idiom, it moved out of Indonesia completely—except for the fact that it was played in Indonesia by Indonesians.⁶⁹ *Gambus* and *harmonium* broadcasts straddled boundaries: the songs were for the most part sung in Arabic, but the playlists always included *lagoe extra Melajoe* (Melayu *extra* songs) in Indonesian, and the musical idioms of these broadcasts shifted between the Middle East for the Arabic songs and a Malay/Middle-Eastern/Western mixture for the extras. The appeal was to Muslims of all ethnicities, and to speakers of the lingua franca.

Thus *kroncong*, *Hawaiian*, and the Arabic-language repertoire of *gambus/harmonium* were all supra-ethnic and supra-regional—in fact, to some extent, international. In their *lagoe extra Melajoe*, *gambus* and *harmonium* were not quite supra-ethnic, inasmuch as some of these songs were associated with the Melayu ethnic group, but they were nearly so, since the mother tongue of that group was the lingua franca; and they were fully supra-regional, since the Melayu were the least regionally bound of all Indonesian ethnicities, with sultanates established from Malaya and Aceh to British North Borneo and Maluku.

Today, in the twenty-first century, Indonesian society is so fragmented that no form of expression tied to one ethnic or regional group can be accepted by any other groups as

⁶⁹ This observation applies to *Hawaiian* before the emergence of *langgam Hawaii* (footnote 40).

representing *them*. (For example: although Javanese batik is an internationally recognized symbol of Indonesian culture, a batik national flag would be unthinkable.) The situation was the same in the early years of the twentieth century, when first gramophone and then radio were introduced to the colony. These media adapted to the fragmentation by trying to serve all of the principal ethnic groups. But the strongest impulse of mass media is to maximize the audience, to market to the mass, and since no ethnically or regionally delimited music could serve as a mass Indonesian music, it was necessary to adopt symbolic forms free of such linkage: forms tied to no particular place within Indonesia, or forms from outside Indonesia altogether. Popular music in foreign musical idioms and instrumentation and sung either in a foreign language or in Indonesian was one such form; music associated with a world religion like Christianity or Islam was another.⁷⁰ This is in large part, I believe, what accounts for the prominence in 1938 of *kroncong*, *Hawaiian*, *orkes gambus*, and *orkes harmonium* alongside all the gamelan, *wayang*, and *tembang*.

Once PPRK took over *siaran ketimuran*, the role of *kroncong* in creating a mass audience acquired a political interpretation. PPRK's first high-profile live event, variously billed as a concert of Indonesian folk music (*Volkconcert Indonesia*) and a performance of Eastern art (*pertoendjoekan kesenian Timoer*), was a concert held in the Schouwburg in Batavia on 11 January 1941 and nominally devoted to *kroncong*, which Soetardjo described in his opening speech as a kind of music "enjoyed (*digemari*) by almost all the Eastern people who live in these various islands." (The definition of *kroncong* was sufficiently loose by then that the concert

⁷⁰ Still today, the only musics that have a pan-Indonesian audience are, on the one hand, the various kinds of Indonesian-language popular music, all of which use Western instrumentation and elements of Western idiom, and, on the other, music associated with Islam or, to a lesser extent, with Protestant and Catholic Christianity.

probably included other types of popular music as well, as did the radio broadcasts itemized in Playlists 8, 9, and 10.) The groups performing were Krontjong Orkest The Golden Star, Krontjong Orkest Lief Java, and the PPRK Radio Orkest. Lief Java wore Javanese dress; the Radio Orkest wore dinner jackets. Miss Roekiah, Miss Ijem, and Miss Soelami sang in the concert, and the comedian known as Botol Kosong (Empty Bottle) also performed.⁷¹

In the very first issue of PPRK's program guide *Soeara Timoer*, covering the two weeks ending with that concert, one of the editors, Hamid Algadrie, published a manifesto titled "PPRK and Indonesian culture," which proclaims that

Indonesian society has only recently arisen from sleep. It has been a static society but is now moving to become a dynamic one; it is an Eastern society that has just "married" with Western society and has not yet produced the child that will, when it is grown, be Indonesian culture in the true sense, namely *a culture that can be understood by every member of Indonesian society, and that contains an active spirit!*

In our view, this is PPRK's primary duty: to aid in forming this Indonesian culture for the future, and to ensure the success of the "marriage" between Eastern and Western culture, so our society and culture do not become something unproductive, "between two worlds, the other powerless to be born," as in a wrong marriage, one that cannot produce healthy offspring.⁷²

⁷¹ Soetardjo's speech was published in *Soeara Timoer* 1941. The details of the performers' dress and the names of the soloists come from Boediardjo 1941b.

⁷² *Soeara Timoer* 1940–1941. "Masjaraikat Indonesia adalah satoe masjaraikat jang beloem beberapa lama bangoen dari tidoernja, satoe masjaraikat jang statisch jang sedang menoedjoe ke masjaraikat jang dynamisch, satoe masjaraikat Timoer jang baroe 'menikah' dengan masjaraikat Barat, jang beloem dapat melahirkan anak, jang djika dewasa, akan meroepakan keboedajaan Indonesia, dalam artian kata jang sesoenggoehnja: jalah *keboedajaan jang dapat difaham oleh tiap-tiap anggauta dari masjaraikat Indonesia dan keboedajaan jang mengandoeng djiwa jang bergerak!* [The words in italics here are all caps in the original.] [Paragraph] Sekedar pemandangan kita disinilah terletak kewadjiban P.P.R.K. jang teroetama: membantoe membentoeok keboedajaan Indonesia jang satoe oentoeok hari kemoedian dan mendjaga berhasilnja 'perkawinan' diantara keboedajaan Timoer dan Barat, soepaja masjaraikat dan keboedajaan kita tida meroepakan sesoeatoe jang onproductief, between two worlds, the other powerless to be born, sebagai satoe perkawinan jang salah, tak koeasa melahirkan toeroenan jang sehat."

The English phrases in the second paragraph are an incomplete quotation from Matthew Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," in which the poet speaks of himself as "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born."

Algadrie did not specifically name *kroncong* as the child of East and West that would usher in a true Indonesian culture, and Soetardjo in his opening speech did not claim more for *kroncong* than that it was widely enjoyed. But commentators recognized instantly that PPRK was proposing *kroncong* as a *moesik persatoean*, a “music of unity” that could appeal to all Indonesians. The well-known polemic in the journals *Poedjangga Baroe* and *Kritiek en Opbouw* on “kroncong vs. gamelan” turns on this point.⁷³ Ali Boediardjo (1941b) started it off by attacking the 11 January concert as an “American-style show” (*show tjara Amerika*) and stating that he was appalled that PPRK was offering *kroncong* as an example of art (*kesenian*). But, he said, the concert raised a more important question: what should be the unifying music of Indonesia (*moesik manakah jang akan didjadikan moesik persatoean Indonesia*)? Not, in his view, *kroncong*—“that mix of false and shallow romance, that mix of imitation American jazz and showbiz,” that “shadow” (*bajangan*) of European music—but Javanese gamelan, a music of refinement, delicacy, grandeur, and joy. Boediardjo concedes, however, that gamelan music may be *too* refined for modern Indonesian society; but it has the capacity to change, perhaps by incorporating Western elements, perhaps not.

To which Armijn Pané replied (1941a: 257), “Apparently [Boediardjo] forgets that there are people from Sumatra, Manado, or Ambon, who do not find the atmosphere of *gender* and *slenthem* [gamelan instruments] appealing.” Even if they can appreciate it, as Pané himself (a Sumatran) does, they don’t think it’s the highest pinnacle of culture. Pané admits that *kroncong* in the past was shallow, but now—perhaps as a result of radio’s influence, he suggests—it has more content. (However, all he seems to mean by this is that the formulaic

⁷³ The key articles in the polemic are: Boediardjo 1941a in Dutch; its Indonesian translation, Boediardjo 1941b; and Armijn Pané 1941a and 1941b. Other contributions are Resink 1941 and Brandts Buys–van Zijp 1941.

words and syllables formerly used to fill out a verse line and make it fit the melody were now eschewed by songwriters as amateurish.) And because it is enjoyed by all groups (not just one, like Javanese gamelan), it fulfills one of the requirements for a unifying music (*memenoehi salah satoe sjarat moesik persatoean*). That is why PPRK, wanting to satisfy all groups, chose to devote its first concert to *kroncong*. Pané ends his article by saying that “just as there is, alongside the regional languages, the Indonesian language, so also with music: alongside the regional musical arts such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese gamelan, etc., it must be admitted that there is a music of Indonesia in general [*moesik-Indonesia oemoem*], namely *kroncong*” (ibid.: 260).

But this political spin on *kroncong* was, in 1938, still in the future. By forming a mass audience of listeners, radio can be said to have shaped an Indonesian public, but I think it anachronistic to say that in 1938 this public had an Indonesian consciousness. It was instead, I believe, a consciousness directed towards *entertainment*, and ultimately towards consumption. And even in 1941, *kroncong* and popular music in general may have been becoming a *musik persatuan* by virtue of their wide appeal, but I see little indication that they were acquiring political *content*, that they had anything to say about what Indonesia should be. It took the Japanese occupation and the resistance to recolonization by the Dutch to give the audience formed by media, the consumers of entertainment, a political, national purpose.

A digression on nationalism

The word *Indonesia* was officially banned on the air in the DEI until 8 January 1942.⁷⁴ At that time, the Procureur-Generaal wrote to PPRK saying it was now permitted to broadcast speeches and songs containing the word. *Indonesia Raya*, however, was still banned, because it was classified not as a song (*nyanyian*) but as a national anthem (*lagoe kebangsaan*) (*Soeara Timoer* 1942).

Although songs may have been excluded from the airwaves because of government warnings or self-censorship on the part of the stations themselves, I know of only one recording, aside from *Indonesia Raya*, that was banned from circulation. This was *Brani Kerna Benar*, recorded by S. Abdullah and released in November 1936. In late January 1937 the police went after it, seizing copies in record stores and banning future sales.⁷⁵ Here are the lyrics.

Brani Kerna Bener / Be Brave Because You're in the Right

Foxtrot Krontjong – HMV NS 131, issued November 1936⁷⁶

S. Abdullah & the H.M.V. Batavia Orkest

Asal sendiri merasa benar,
Djanganlah moendoer atawa keder,
Maski moesoehnja besar dan angker,
Lawanlah teroes djangan meliker
[=melingker]

Maski apa akan mendjadi,
Madjoelah teroes djanganlah djeri,

So long as you feel you're in the right,
Don't retreat or lose your way.
Even though your opponent is big and
frightening,
Keep on opposing, don't turn away.

Whatever will happen,
Press forward, don't be afraid.

⁷⁴ *Soeara Timoer* 1942. But notice Playlist 20 from 1938, where it slipped in. Perhaps the ban was not carefully enforced.

⁷⁵ *Sinar Pasoendan* 1937a, 1937b. The second article helpfully provides the song lyrics, for anyone who had failed to snare a copy of the record before the stock was seized.

⁷⁶ Here and elsewhere in this chapter, release dates and other discographical details come from my discography-in-progress of pre-war gramophone records issued for the DEI, Malaya, and Straits Settlements. Song-lyrics come from HMV record catalogues or from paper sleeve-inserts issued with the records. The translations into English, admittedly rough, are my own.

Oendjoek dirimoe sebagai laki-laki,
Boeat membela kebenaran sedjati.

Show your manliness,
To defend what is truly right.

If these lyrics were enough to bring out the police, think how innocuous everything else broadcast and sold without interference must have been! To see 1930s *kroncong*, or 1930s radio and gramophone in general, as a nationalist force is, I believe, just wishful thinking.⁷⁷

Modern music

And, finally, what about modernity? Here are instances of how the word *modern* is used in reference to DEI radio music.

Modern (the word itself, untranslated) occurs frequently as a descriptor in the program guides, seemingly serving as part of a performing group's name (though I suspect it may sometimes be a descriptive insertion by the editors rather than the musicians):

- Modern Harmonium Orkest "S. M. Alaydroes"
- Gamboes Orkest Modern "Rozen"
- Modern Gamboes Orkest "Al Wardah"
- Orkest Melajoe Modern [Modern Melayu Orchestra] "Pengahiboer Hati"
- Orkest Melajoe Modern "Sinar Sumatra"
- Krontjong dan Modern Gambang Kromong Orkest "Sinar Kramat"
- Orkest Tiong Hwa Modern [Modern Chinese Orchestra] "The Bright Stars"
- Modern Javaansch Tooneelgezelschap [Modern Javanese Theater Company] "Sri Moeljo Koentjoro" [this was a *kethoprak* troupe].

⁷⁷ Citing Tsuchiya, Mrázek writes: "The radio . . . helped the *kroncong* to become the dominant Indonesian national, indeed nationalist music" (2002:180). Tsuchiya doesn't phrase it quite this way. He says that through radio "*kroncong* melodies made even deeper inroads in Javanese society," and, further, that "in the process of Indonesia's fight for independence from Japan's military rule, *kroncong* became popular in songs inspiring a nationalistic spirit" (1986:82, n.8). Both statements are correct, but Mrázek has not situated them properly in time. The "deeper inroads" were made in the years up to 1942, years when *kroncong* was purely entertainment music. It is true that during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945), and especially during the Indonesian Revolution (1945–1949), *kroncong* songs became a medium for expressing the spirit of resistance and nationalism. But that came about because the Japanese banned the Western popular songs and popular idioms that had increasingly infused *kroncong* since 1930 and by 1942 had, I believe, rendered *kroncong* passé. *Kroncong* was revitalized and, so to speak, re-Indonesianized by the ban, and that is when it became available for nationalist content.

Or it may be used to describe the kind of music to be broadcast:

- “modern kacapi music” [*ketjapi modern*, played by Soehji Soebandi or Soelaiman]
- “modern Chinese tunes” [*lagoe Tiong Hwa modern*, unnamed group]

So what does *modern* mean in reference to music on the radio? What does the descriptor indicate?

In application to the instrumentation of a performing group the meaning is clear: “modern instruments” (*perkakas modern, boenji-boenjian modern, alat-alat modern*) are always European instruments.⁷⁸ Entries from the program guides demonstrate this repeatedly:

- The Strijkorkest [string orchestra] Pandowo performs “Central Javanese music with Western instruments [*lagoe Djawa-tengah dengan instrumenten Barat*]. The times have changed, and the art of instrumental music must also change. And so: Central Javanese music with modern instruments.” Another reference to this ensemble, some years later, states that the modern instruments [*alat boenji-boenjian modern*] include “violin, guitar, cello, etc., to replace the gamelan” [*oentoek pengganti gamelan*].⁷⁹
- The Orkest Ketjapi “Poerwakanti”—which would seem, from the name, to be a Sundanese ensemble of plucked zithers (*kacapi*) plus a bowed lute (*rebab*) or flute (*suling*)—“is not like the usual *kacapi* ensemble. Instead, apart from the *kacapi* themselves, the instruments are all modern [*perkakas moesiknja serba modern*]. Instead of the *rebab*, there is a violin . . . and there is a plucked cello.”⁸⁰
- A photograph of the *Orkest Tiong Hwa Modern* [Modern Chinese Orchestra] “*The Bright Stars*” shows guitar, string bass, accordion, violin, saxophone, and, indistinctly, what might be a trumpet. No traditional Chinese instruments are evident (*Soeara-Nirom* 1939b).
- A photograph of the Orkest Modern Al-Ittihad, which plays “modern Arab music,” shows three guitars, violin, double bass, ukulele, tambourine, trumpet, and harmonium (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940b).

⁷⁸ The idea of “modernizing” a traditional instrument—developing gamelan instruments that play European major/minor scales, for example—does not arise in the program guides.

⁷⁹ The first quotation is from *Soeara Nirom* 1937f: “Zaman telah beredar dan berganti, demikian poela matjam kesenian boenji-boenjian djoega menghendaki perobahan: Lagoe Djawa-tengah dengan instrumenten, jang modern.” The second, listing the instruments, is from *Soeara-Nirom* 1940f.

⁸⁰ *Soeara-Nirom* 1940b. The description specifies that the cello is not held upright but is instead placed horizontally across the player’s lap, and that it is “not only plucked but also struck with the palm, making a thrumming sound [*mendengoeng*] like a *gendang*” (the kind of drum used in Javanese and Sundanese gamelan). The “cello-drum” sound was also a feature of *kroncong* from at least the mid-1920s.

- A photograph of the Orkest Soeling Modern daripada Kepandoean Arab “Al Irsyad” [the Modern Flute Orchestra of the Arab Scout Troupe “Al Irsyad”], from Surabaya, shows a group of boys in scouting uniforms, with a boy conductor in front. The instruments are side-blown bamboo or wooden flutes (these were introduced into Indonesia by missionaries in the 19th century) plus two guitars and a sit-down drum kit (bass drum, two snare drums, and a wood block) (*Soeara-Nirom* 1939c).
- In reference to the Orkest “Minangkabau Saio”: “In order to fulfill the demands of Minangkabau art, so that it should not be too hard-pressed [*terlaloe terdesak*] by modern music and instruments [*alat dan lagoe modern*], tuan Rozen Bahar, the director, has brought from West Sumatra two master musicians.” They play traditional Minang instruments: *rabab* (bowed lute) and *salung* (*saluang*, an oblique flute) (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940c).
- The Orkest “Nam Fong” will play “modern Chinese music with modern and old-style instruments [*perkakas modern dan asali*].” A photograph of the ensemble shows Chinese instruments (*yangqin*, *sanhsien*, *erhu*, and *hsiao*), plus two violins and a guitar (*Soeara Nirom* 1939a). Guess which instruments are the modern ones?

In application to style and repertoire, the meaning of *modern* is more complicated. Not surprisingly, it is often contrasted with terms denoting the past, such as *lama*, *koeno*, *asli*, and *origineel*,⁸¹ and linked instead with the ideas of youth, newness, and the present:

Among the Arabs [in Batavia], many of the young people prefer modern songs to old ones [*lagoe modern dari pada lagoe koeno*]. The same is true among the Chinese (*Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 1937a).

It seems that English has become the language of our young people. Everywhere and all the time they sing in English. Their parents sometimes become annoyed at them, because their older ears are tuned and suited only to grand and weighty old-style music [*moesik lama, jang alamat dan berat itoe*]. Parents dearly wish to see their children pay more attention to their own culture [i.e., rather than foreign culture]. Older people cannot adjust their sensibility and their listening to the commotion [*kebisingan*] found in all modern songs and instrumental music, nor to

⁸¹ The Indonesian equivalent of *origineel* is *asli*; it is defined in dictionaries from the 1930s and ‘40s as “original,” but in most cases in Indonesian music no one knows what the original repertoire or style actually was. One knows only what people did within living memory, or what is thought to have been earlier practice. This is why I typically prefer to translate both *origineel* and *asli* as “old-style,” or, in some contexts, “traditional.” As for the other antonyms of *modern*: *lama* means “old,” and *kuno* ranges in meaning from “old” back through “archaic” to “ancient.”

the extreme behavior of young people reflected in the songs. *Kroncong, gamelan, kacapi, rebab, salung, and suling* remain the sounds old people love.⁸²

The existence of contrasting modern and old-style versions of a genre in the repertoire of a single performing group is frequently mentioned in the program guides:⁸³

- “Krontjong-Orkest ‘The Melody Band’ . . . presents a variety of *kroncong* and *stambul* songs, both old-style [*origineel*] and modern” (*Soeara Nirom* 1938a, entry for 9 January; cf. Playlist 9).
- “Alongside *lagoe Tapanuli lama* [i.e., old songs from the region of northern Sumatra known as Tapanuli, the homeland of the Toba Batak], various kinds of modern Tapanuli songs have emerged, as will be heard in the broadcast by Batak Hawaiian Tapan Na Uli (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940a).
- Hoa Kiauw, a *gambang kromong* ensemble, “presents modern and old-style *gambang kromong*” [*lagoe gambang-kromong modern dan asli*] (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940h).

What then makes a genre, or a version of a genre, modern? Instrumentation alone does not do it, since it is possible to have a traditional repertoire played on Western instruments (Strijkorkest Pandowo and Orkest Ketjapi Poerwakanti, above), and to have a modern repertoire played on a traditional instrument (*kacapi modern*, discussed below). I propose that in the discourse of DEI radio it is *the incorporation of elements of the European and American*

⁸² Here is the original text of this interesting passage (*Soeara-Nirom* 1940i): “Maka serasa bahasa Inggeris itoe telah mendjadi bahasa pemoeda kita seoemoemnja. Dimana sadja dan bilapoen mereka menjanjan njanji dalam bahasa Inggeris selaloe. Maka orang toea mereka kadang-kadang djadi kesal memikirkan itoe, sebab pendengaran telinga orang toea itoe masih selaras dan hanja sesoeai dengan soeara moesik lama, jang alamat [*see below*] dan berat itoe. Orang toea itoe ingin sekali melihat anaknja lebih banjak menoedjoekan perhatian akan boeah keboedajaan sendiri. Orang toea itoe tidak dapat menjesoeaikan per[a]saan dan pendengarannya kepada kebisingan jang terkandoeng didalam segala lagoe dan moesik modern, dan djoega akan ketelandjoeran pemoeda jang terbajang didalamnja. Krontjong, gamelan, ketjapi, rebab, saloeng dan soeling masih mendjadi alat boenji-boenjian jang masih digemari sangat.” This is an old use of *alamat* that does not appear in today’s dictionaries (e.g. Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2004, or Departemen Pendidikan Nasional 2008). It is found, however, in Iken and Harahap’s *Kitab arti logat Melajoe* (1940:14), which gives *kehormatan, kemegahan, and kebesaran* as a second group of meanings after the current senses of “street address,” “sign,” etc.

⁸³ On the other hand, some groups play *only* the modern or *only* the old-style version of a genre; and some genres have only one form on radio. In the case of Javanese and Sundanese gamelan, for example, the term *asli* frequently appears in conjunction with gamelan broadcasts, but *modern* never does, except in reference to instrumentation when the music is transferred to European stringed instruments (as with the Strijkorkest Pandowo above). Gamelan was inevitably “traditional,” and *asli* appears in the program-guide descriptions not to contrast the *asli* form with a modern one, but to contrast gamelan music with all the modern music around it on the radio. *Hawaiian* is another genre with only one form: there was no *asli* version, so “modern” is not needed in the descriptions.

(“Western”) popular music of the 1920s and ’30s that qualifies a music as modern. The elements may be specific popular songs, or, more generally, dance-rhythms, song-forms, the common-practice harmony, or the accompaniment idioms and arrangement styles of Western popular music.

Consider the following genres, all characterized in the program guides either as wholly modern (e.g. “modern Chinese music”) or as having both a modern and an old-style repertoire:

- ***Kroncong and stambul.*** As quoted above, The Melody Band offers both *origineel* and *modern kroncong* and *stambul*. The difference is one of both idiom and instrumentation: old-style *kroncong* and *stambul* used a string band of violin, small lutes, and cello, and a distinctive accompaniment idiom, while the modern songs of the 1930s expanded the instrumentation (already “modern,” in that the instruments of the old style were Western) to include dance-band instruments (clarinet, trumpet, saxophone, piano, etc.), and they adopted dance-band idioms: jazz, blues, swing, rumba, tango, foxtrot, beguine, and so forth. When these idioms were applied to compositions in the specific structures of *kroncong* and *stambul*, the results were *kroncong tango*, *kroncong blues*, etc., collectively called *kroncong modern*.
- ***Sundanese kacapi ensembles.*** Two performers, Soehji Soebandi and Soelaiman, regularly appeared (individually) on NIROM playing the Sundanese *kacapi* or plucked zither. Their programs were called *ketjapi (=kacapi) modern*. The genre title contrasts implicitly with the very frequent broadcasts by one or another *kacapi orkest*, which presented the much-loved genre of *tembang Sunda*, discussed earlier in connection with Playlists 5, 6, and 7.

The contrast is implicit because, for some reason, *tembang Sunda* was not characterized in the program guides as *asli*.⁸⁴ *Tembang Sunda* was sung entirely in Sundanese and was accompanied only by the traditional instrumentation of one or more *kacapi* plus a flute (*suling*) or a bowed lute (*rebab*). What made the *kacapi modern* broadcasts modern was not the instrumentation, since both musicians are described as playing the *kacapi*, but the repertoire. Playlist 13 shows one of Soebandi’s broadcasts: five tunes with English titles (including Shirley Temple’s signature song, *On the Good Ship Lollipop*) and one with a Hawaiian title (*Oea-oea*, the opening piece for all of Soebandi’s broadcasts, which suggests that his *kacapi* may have imitated the sound of a Hawaiian guitar in some numbers). Others of his broadcasts included *La Paloma*

⁸⁴ I speculate that the reason *tembang Sunda* on the radio is not called *asli* is that *panambih* had already become so prominent that the 1930s style of performance was felt to be a newer, modified form of the genre. Playlist 5, for example, with one *tembang* paired with one *panambih*, clearly gives a greater share of the performance to *panambih* than more classical programs like those in Playlists 6 and 7, where one *panambih* follows a group of *tembang*. So the 1930s form was already not *asli*—but it was not *modern*, because it had not yet assimilated significantly to Western or Indonesian popular music.

and *Bei Mir Bist Du Schön*; there was not one with even an Indonesian—let alone a Sundanese—title.

The other *kacapi modern* performer, Soelaiman, was one of the directors of the Ketjapi Orkest “Margaloejoe,” which played traditional *tembang Sunda* repertoire (though its programs were less formal than those shown in Playlists 5, 6, and 7). On his own, however, in the *kacapi modern* broadcasts, Soelaiman played mainly pieces with Indonesian (not Sundanese) titles, and he included melodies totally outside the *tembang Sunda* repertoire, such as *Terang Boelan* (Miss Roekiah’s film hit, a Western-idiom popular song) and the Batavian popular tunes *Djali-djali* and *Tjantek Manis*, presumably arranged in a Western idiom.

- **Chinese music (*lagu Tionghoa*).** Playlist 14 shows a broadcast by the Orkest Tionghwa Modern [modern Chinese orchestra] “The Bright Stars.” This is the same Chinese-music ensemble whose instruments (guitar, string bass, accordion, violin, saxophone, trumpet?) were listed above. In its broadcasts, the group always played “modern Chinese music” (no contrasting old-style tunes were indicated), plus a number of extras, usually with titles in English. In this broadcast, six of the extras were taken from a 1937 American movie, *The Singing Marine*, starring Dick Powell. In other broadcasts by this group, the extra songs included *I’m Popeye the Sailor Man*, *Pennies from Heaven*, *Tiger Rag*, and *Kicking the Gong Around*. I am not able to assess the Chinese-language titles, but the Western instrumentation of the ensemble, as well as the juxtaposition of Chinese songs with English-language ones, strongly suggest that they came from the realm of Western-idiom Chinese popular music. If so, then—just as *kacapi modern* was contrasted with *tembang Sunda*—they are implicitly contrasted with the Chinese traditional music heard in *yang kim* or *pat im* broadcasts.
- **Batak music (*lagu Batak*).** Toba Batak traditional music—typically instrumental and sounding quite unlike the music of a Western string band or dance band—was never, so far as I know, broadcast on DEI radio, and certainly not in 1938 on the stations I deal with here. Batak music on the radio and on gramophone records was newly composed; it focused on singers and consisted of duets and choruses, tangos and rumbas in the standard Western harmonic idiom. (Cf. the quotation above concerning the Batak Hawaiian Tapiian Na Uli group. Note the “Hawaiian” in the group’s name.)
- **Melayu music (*lagu Melayu*), Harmonium, Gambus.** I must be more tentative when we come to these three genres. More work needs to be done to assess the differences among them and the extent to which their explicitly modern forms (*Melayu modern*, *gambus modern*, and *modern harmonium*) embraced Western popular music.

I include sample playlists of their modern-form broadcasts as Playlists 15-20. Only one piece comes unequivocally from the West: the instrumental tango *A Media Luz* in Playlist 15. (The second instrumental in that broadcast, *Salome*, probably does as well.) The other titles are in Arabic and Indonesian. Are the Arabic titles rumbas and tangos, as they often are on those DEI gramophone records of the period that are sung in Arabic? (Remember the rumbas in Playlist 3, broadcast by a *gambus* orchestra *not* designated as modern: even the ordinary *gambus* groups were playing Western dance-music.) And the Melayu titles—are these ordinary urban popular songs in Western

idioms, or are they performed in the heterophonic unharmonized idiom of traditional Melayu Deli music?

My supposition is that when Playlist 16 says the broadcast will include “popular songs” (*lagoe-lagoe jang populair*), it means songs drawn from the Westernized repertoire omnipresent on the radio, not from a separate and narrower repertoire of Melayu-idiom popular song. Corroboration seems to come from a 1939 program-guide entry for the Orkest Melajoe Modern “Sinar Sumatra”: “[The group’s] Melayu songs are played with all modern instruments. But that is not all! The lyrics of modern Western songs are translated into Malay. . . . [The director] always tries to serve up the songs currently most favored by listeners in general.”⁸⁵ If the words were translated from Western songs, it seems highly likely the music itself was also Western.

To sum up, the essential procedure for making an Indonesian (or Chinese, or Arabic-language) music modern was to fuse it, in one way or another, with Western popular music. The striking point here is the equation of modern with *popular*, and hence with mass media, the indispensable means of dissemination of popular music. Modernity, on the radio, had nothing to do with Western artistic *modernism*—with Stravinsky or Joyce or Mondrian—but everything to do with Western popular entertainment. Thus the opposition of *asli* and *modern* in radio discourse of the colonial era is a false antithesis, as is the opposition persisting in twenty-first-century Indonesian discourse between *traditional* and *modern* music or other arts. The modern can follow from and extend and reenvision the traditional, just as that exceedingly modern—modernistic—music, *kebyar*, springs from and reformulates the traditional Balinese idioms and repertoires that preceded it. The opposite of the *asli* or traditional in Indonesia, whether in the 1930s or the 2010s, is not the modern but the popular, which posits radically different frames of reference, aesthetics, functions, and modes of involvement.

⁸⁵ “Lagoe2 Melajoe dimainkan dengan perkakas jang serba modern. Boekan itoe sadja artinja penjiaran ini! Dari lagoe2 Barat jang modern perkataannya diterdjamaahkan kedalam bahasa Melajoe. Toean Mohamad Noerdin, pemimpinnja, senantiasa beroesaha melajankan lagoe2 jang pada saat ini sangat digemari oleh pendengar seoemoemnja” (*Soeara-Nirom* 1939b).

PLAYLIST 13. Kacapi Modern

Ketjapi modern, dimainkan oleh Soehji Soebandi. [Modern *kacapi*, played by Soehji Soebandi.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 7 September 1938, 11:30-12:00.

Oea-oea
Alone
Tina
Happy Days
On the Good Ship Lolly-pop
Little Man

PLAYLIST 14. Modern Chinese

Orkest Tiong Hwa modern "The Bright Stars" atawa "Bing Sing," dipimpin oleh toean Tan Soen Han di dalam Studio NIROM, memperdengarkan matjam-matjam lagoe Tiong Hwa modern. [The modern Chinese Orchestra "The Bright Stars" or "Bing Sing," directed by tuan Tan Soen Han in the NIROM Studio, presents various modern Chinese tunes.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Soerabaia), 23 August 1938, 20:00-22:00.

[Ten tunes with Chinese titles, transliterations *sic* in the program guide]:

Siauw Siauw Moo Lie
Tjhwee Bauw Bauw
Tjwee Hoo Ti I Oe
Nie Yauw Djang Koo
Mai Pauw Koo
Yauw Lan Tjih
Yen Tjhwen
Tjin Tjoeng
Sin Mao Mao U
Ta Ti Sin Tjwin Tjih

Extra's:

Song-hits from the The singing Marine [movie, 1937]:

The Song of the Marines (steps)
'Cause My Baby Says It's So (fox-trot)
You Can't Run Away from Love (slow-fox)
The Lady Who Couldn't Be Kissed (fox-trot)
Night over Shanghai (fox-trot)
I Know Now (slow-fox)
Hoor Mijn Lied, Violetta (tango)
Lulu's Back in Town (fox-trot)
Some Fiddlin' (violin solo)
Here Come the British (fox-trot)

PLAYLIST 15. Melayu Modern

Orkest Melajoe Modern "Sinar Sumatra," dipimpin oleh toean Moehamad Noerdin. [Modern Melayu Orchestra "Sinar Sumatra," directed by tuan Moehamad Noerdin.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 12 August 1938, 20:00-22:00.

Opening marsch
Bersenang Hati
Boeroeng Tjamar
A Media Luz (muziek [=instrumental])
Rindoe
Lago Dana
Ranoengan Kalboe
Salome (muziek [=instrumental])

PLAYLIST 16. Melayu Modern

Orkest Melajoe Modern "Penghiboer Hati," dipimpin oleh toean St. Perang Boestami, dinjanjikan oleh Nona Siti Priwati dan Boeng Sjaugie. [Modern Melayu Orchestra "Penghibur Hati," directed by tuan St. Perang Boestami, with singers Nona Siti Priwati and Boeng Sjaugie.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 4 September 1938, 23:00-24:00.

Lago Pemboeka'an
Sambil Berbaring
Wangkang Petjah
Anak Dagang
Nasib Rabihatoen
Seri Sambas
ditambah dengan lagoe-lago jang populair [*plus popular songs*]

PLAYLIST 17. Melayu Modern

Orkest Melajoe modern dipimpin oleh toean August Oedin, dengan soeara dari Siti Rohana. [Modern Melayu Orchestra, directed by tuan August Oedin, with Siti Rohana, singer.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 25 May 1938, 23:00-24:00.

Pemboeka'an: Turksch Marsch
Air Mawar Toempah
Serantih
Laili Madjenoen
Nasib Rabihatoen
Boeroeng Poetih
Penoetoep: Nina Bobok

PLAYLIST 18. Modern Harmonium

Modern Harmonium Orkest "S. M. Alaydroes."

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 23 August 1938, 21:30-23:30.

S. M. Marsch
Menoentoet Ilmoe
Agisbis Mata Sjita
Pasar Gambir Didirikan
Bandar Negeri
Kaoem Iboe
Mata Jakiran
Gamboes Singapo[e]ra
Jahabiboelgalbi Silni
Tanah Periangan
Penoetoep

PLAYLIST 19. Modern Gambus

Modern Gamboes Orkest "Pemoeda," dipimpin oleh toean H. Moh. Jasin Aldjawi. [Gamboes Orkest
"Pemoeda," directed by tuan H. Moh. Jasin Aldjawi.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 12 December 1938, 22:30-24:00.

Aldjawi Marsch
Siaran Betawi
Lenggang Melenggang
Kasidah Lilazzatoun
[title not given]
[title not given]
Kasidah Jagoellama

PLAYLIST 20. Gambus [not explicitly "modern," but playing "the newest Arab and Melayu songs"]

Gamboes Orkest "Pemoeda," jang dipimpin oleh toean H. M. Jasin All Djawi [=Aldjawi]

memperdengarkan lagoe-lagoe Arab dan Melajoe jang paling baharoe. [Gamboes Orkest

"Pemoeda," directed by tuan H. M. Jasin All Djawi, presents the newest Arab and Melayu songs.]

NIROM Oostersche Programma (Batavia/Bandoeng), 9 June 1938, 20:00-22:00.

Assalamoealaikoem
Ala Ja' Aini Djoed
Lahmin Ha
Intermezzo
Boeahnja Poelau Djawa
Di Indonesia
Intermezzo
Allaj Loe Feraum
Agistoe Fi Manami
Agallili
Intermezzo
Nasibnja Jasin All Djawi
Terang Boelan di Poelau Djawa



Vereeniging Al Ihram beractie akan mengirimkan lagoe-lagoenja.



Figure 4.3. Two *gambus* ensembles. Top: Vereeniging Al Ihram (Batavia), from VORO's anniversary book, 1936. Below: Dammoessoebban Gamboes Partij (Medan), from *Soera Nirom* 6(25), 10-23 December 1939.

Modern times

Did radio and gramophone usher their audience into the modern age? In one sense absolutely they did. These media were technologically modern, and they promoted—indeed enforced—modern ways of relating to music: in your home rather than at a celebration; listening to invisible musicians (or, for musicians, performing for an invisible audience); listening, in the case of gramophone records, to performances that could be repeated note for note; listening, if you were a woman, to music that you might not have been allowed or would not have dared to go to hear in person. And, as Jennifer Lindsay points out in the passage I quoted as an epigraph, they “democratized” the court arts, allowing anyone with access to a radio to listen; moreover, to paraphrase her formulation, by broadcasting the music of specific localities, radio put the local and the modern in dialogue.

But while the medium itself was ineluctably modern and democratic (at least for anyone who could afford a radio), the content was often strongly conservative: witness the many gamelan broadcasts from the court bastions of Javanese tradition, or the *tembang Sunda* concerts that tethered the “extras” (*panambih*) to the classic repertoire and thus restrained them from independence, though (judging from the quantity of gramophone records devoted to them) they were what the public most enjoyed. I think it likely that there was, at least at NIROM, a deliberate effort, a policy, to balance popular with traditional, in order to maximize the audience by appealing to both adults and youth, and also to assert the continuing value of the traditional. This assertion is the burden of the speech by Soetardjo, the director of PPRK, at NIROM’s official handover of *siaran ketimuran* in November 1940:

In the last century, Eastern culture was greatly influenced, indeed sometimes forced, by Western culture to become modern, advanced and proper [*sopan*].

Evidently [people] thought that by imitating everything that came from the West they would become advanced and proper [=respectable?]. Among our youth there are not a few who enjoy and value jazz more than the music of the East. It is probably not too much to say that there are also young people who find gamelan and other Eastern music completely alien. For example, they consider the sound of the gamelan boring. If our young people, who will be the seed of our people [=nation?] in the future, do not change their attitude and their direction, I fear that our nation will be disturbed and weakened.⁸⁶

Even as it embodied modernity in its medium and in the social relations it facilitated, and even as it promoted what it defined as the modern in its *kroncong*, *Hawaiian*, and popular music programs, radio conveyed ambivalence about the modern age. So did other arts and other media—gramophone records, theater, popular novels. *Lain Dahoele, Lain Sekarang* (“Times Change”), a radio play broadcast over NIROM in November 1939 by students in Bandung, had the moral, “be modern if you wish, but don’t forget tradition” (*modern tinggal modern, akan tetapi adat istiadat djangan ditinggalkan*) (*Soeara-Nirom* 1939e). Another radio play, broadcast over NIROM in August 1938, was titled *Gadis Modern* (“Modern Girl”):

This story will show how a girl comes to ruin because she does not obey the wishes and instruction of her father and instead follows her own wishes and her own opinions. Her father gives her wise advice, but her mother spoils her, and she [the girl] prefers to follow the spirit of the time [*kemaoean zaman*] rather than heed her father’s advice.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ “Berangkali [sic] disini pada tempatnja, kaloe saja peringetken, bahoea dalem abad jang paling achir ini keboedaja’an Timoer banjak dipengaroei, malahan djoega ada kalanja terdesek oleh keboedaja’an Barat marika mendjadi modern, madjoe dan sopan [sic; *garbled?*]. Roepanja marika mengira, bahoea meniroe segala sesoeatoe jang dateng dari Barat itoe mendjadi teradjoe atas kemadjoean dan kesopanan marika. Dikalangan pemoeda kita ada malah boleh djadi tida sedikit jang lebih gemar dan mengharga [sic] moesik Jazz dari pada mendengerken boenjia-boenjia Ketimoeran. Agaknja tida berlebih-lebihan, djika saja kataken, bahoea ada djoega pemoeda pemoeda kita jang asing sama sekali pada gamelan dan laen boenji boenjia Timoer. Soeara gamelan misalnja katanja membosenken (saai). Kaloe pemoeda kita jang mendjadi bibit ra’jat kita di kamoedian hari, tida merobah sikep dan haloean ini, saja koeatir kebangsa’an kita aken tergangguoe dan nistjaja mendjadiken lemahnja (labiel) bangsa kita” (*Hong Po* 1940).

⁸⁷ “Tjeritera ini akan menoenjoekkan, bagaimana seorang Gadis telah terdjeroemoes kedalam djoerang ‘neraka’ oleh karena tiada meneroet kemaoen [sic] dan pitoeah orang Toeanja, ia meneroet kemaoeannja sendiri dan meneroet pendapatannja sendiri sadja. Diberi nasèhat oleh Bapanja, akan tetapi sebaliknja dimandjakan dengan mandja jang salah oleh lboenja, lebih soeka meneroet kemaoean zaman dari pada meneroet nasèhat” (*Soeara Nirom* 1938c). The play was written by B. Soetan; it may be the same story used by Chang Mung Tze (1939) in the novel *Nona Modern?* (*Modern Miss?*), discussed below.

These two themes—“times change” and “the modern girl”—recur over and over in late-colonial popular culture. They are in fact often melded, since a key example of changing times is that young women no longer behave as they used to: they disobey their parents, refuse arranged marriages, resist limitations on free association (*pergaoelan bebas*) with the opposite sex. The following song lyric, published in a VORO program guide (*Pewartu V.O.R.O.* 1936a) under the rubric “Songs for our young people,” shows the two themes combined:

Doeloe dan Sekarang / Then and Now

Krontjong-tango – HMV NS 79, issued April 1936
S. Abdullah & the "His Master's Voice" Soerabaia Orkest

Nonah-nonah di zaman dahoeleoe
Ta' boleh sembarang keloear pintoe
Roepanja alim sangat pemaloe
Apa jang dipikir trada jang tahoe.

Young women in the old days
Could not go out of the house at will
In appearance they were pious and very modest
What they were thinking, no one knew.

Nonah-nonah zaman sekarang
Pandai berias roepanja garang
Soeka bertjanda soeka bergadang
Gila berdansa ta' boleh dilarang.

Young women today
Skillfully put on makeup to look fierce
They like to joke and stay out all night
They're crazy for dancing and can't be
forbidden.

Another lyric, concerned only with the “modern girl” side of the coin, was published in a catalogue advertising new gramophone records on the HMV label:

Gadis Modern / Modern Girls

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 477, issued November 1938
Miss Eulis

Gadis moderen ganti pakeannja
Sarong kebaja soeda diboeangnja
Pake rok pande sampai diloetoetnja
Kaloe naek speda kalihatan pahanja.

Modern girls have changed their clothing
They've thrown out their sarongs and kabayas.
They wear short dresses down to their knees
When they ride a bicycle you see their thighs.

Atoeran barat selaloe di pakekan	They do everything in the Western way
Adat kabangsaan poera2 diloepakan	They pretend they've forgotten the traditional ways
Salam dan hormat soeda di gantikan	They no longer use respectful greetings and speech
Omongan tjara barat, selaloe di goenakan.	The Western way of talking is what they always use.

These songs are arranged as dance-tunes (foxtrot, paso doble, rumba, tango) and played by a dance-band, and they are broadcast on the radio or played on the gramophone. Both the songs themselves and the media that disseminate them *depend* on popular music for their appeal and success. Purporting to be critical of modernity, the songs are nevertheless wholly modern in their medium. There are many other such songs, for some of which I give the lyrics in Appendix 3. *Boeanja Pergaoelan* (The Fruits of [Free] Association), *Gadis Djaman Sekarang* (Girls Today), *Prampoean dan Mode* (Women and Fashion) are further examples of the “modern girl” (or “modern woman”) theme, but others range more widely: the world-wide economic depression (*Tempo Soesah*, “Hard Times”); sexual license and exploitation (*Malam2 di Tandjoeng Priok*, “Nighttime in Tanjung Priok”; *Kepaloeannja Lelaki*, “The Dishonesty of Men”); the world’s violence and cruelty (*Boeroeng Koetlang*, “Songbird”; *Kekedjaman Doenia*, “The Harshness of the World”). Some use the Muslim idea of *dunia fana*, the impermanence of this world and the permanence of the next, to criticize the modern pursuit of pleasure (*Djalannja Pengidoepan*, “The Course of Life”; *Djalannja Doenia*, “The Way of the World”).

In these songs, the inherent dissonance between their overt content and their presentation negates or trivializes the content: rumbas decrying the rumba. Here is a striking instance of such self-cancellation. It is a two-sided gramophone record, one song on each side.

On one side is a tango about famine, and on the other a foxtrot about the fun of going on a picnic every week.

Bahaya Lapar / The danger of famine

Tango Krontjong – HMV NS 397, issued May 1938

Gadjali & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Banjak padi bergoedang goedang
Orang pada tida perdoeli.

When there's lots of rice in the storehouses
No one thinks about it.

Bahaya lapar dateng menjerang
Nasi semangkok berharga sekali.

When the danger of famine looms
A bowl of rice is very precious.

Brilliant, permata jang dikagoemken
Tra ada jang maoe beli.

Gems and jewels that were admired
No one wants to buy them.

Kaloe soeda begitoe baroe rasaken
Beras dan padi perloe sekali.

Only when things come to this do we realize
That rice is very necessary.

Bikin Picnic / Let's Make a Picnic

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 397, issued May 1938

Gadjali & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Marilah kita orang bersama berdjalan di ini hari
Djangan sampe kaloepahan membawak
barang makanan.

Let's go on a trip today
Don't forget to bring things to eat.

Marilah kita pergi ke kali, kali aernja jang djerni
Di sitoe bikin satoe picnic mentjari kasenangan
Ini picnic ada satoe sport, satoe sport jang baik sekali.
Bikin kita orang sekalian dapet banjak pengalaman
Maka itoe setiap minggoe sedikitnja moesti sekali
Pergilah Toean bikin picnic mentjari kasenangan.

Let's go to the river where the water is clear
There we'll make a picnic and have fun
A picnic is sport, a very good kind of sport.
It will give us lots of experiences
So we should do it at least once a week
Go on, Mister, make a picnic and have fun.

The ambivalence of popular culture towards modernity is understandable, for the modern world posed serious challenges to longstanding Indonesian and Chinese-Indonesian ideas of how to live. Cherished customs and assumptions came under attack. Many of the challenges had to do with women, as “modern girls” questioned the notions of subservience to

their husbands, arranged marriages, and the restriction of their sphere of activity to the home. But modernity in DEI popular music is nothing more than dancing and pleasure (let's make a picnic), and the criticisms of modernity are both formulaic and vapid: modern ways may lead to trouble, and they are Western. (As if the music these songs are couched in were not.)

Popular literature sometimes grappled more seriously with modernity. For example, we see a different notion of the "modern girl," or, more precisely, of her potential, in a prefatory note that the novelist Liem Khing Hoo, for nine years the editor of the monthly series of pocket novels *Tjerita Roman* (1929–1941), inserted into the November 1939 issue and signed with his pen-name, Romano. The note again accuses modern girls of shallowness, but for once it offers an idea of the constructive possibilities of modernity:

Being modern is not just being good at dancing, taking trips, going to the movies. hanging around with your male friends. There are many things women have not yet worked on: social improvement, increasing their own inner resources and knowledge of the world, improving the economic situation, etc.⁸⁸

The novel this note prefaces is Chang Mung Tze's *Nona Modern? (Modern Miss?)*, which takes the typical attitude of 1930s novels towards the modern girl. It features a headstrong girl from a wealthy Chinese family in Java (in "the city of S") who, indulged by her mother, disregards her father's advice and runs away with a charming gambler. Eventually he is revealed as a deceiver who wants her to prostitute herself to cancel his losses. In despair and disgust she poisons herself and him. Although in her carefree life before she meets the gambler she plays piano, drives a car, speaks English, and enjoys dancing and tennis, the author does not

⁸⁸ "Sedikit oetjapan: Boeat bisa diseboet modern, boekan tjoema itoe pande dansa, pesiar, nonton bioscoop, galang-goeloeng dengan kawan-kawan lelaki, tapi masih ada banjak hal jang kaoem prempoean belon kerdjaken, seperti: perbaekin sociaal, mempertinggiken tingkatan batin dan pengetaoean hidoep, memperbaekin tingkatan economie d.l.l. [signed] *Romano*" (in Chang 1939). For Liem Khing Hoo, see Salmon 1981:239.

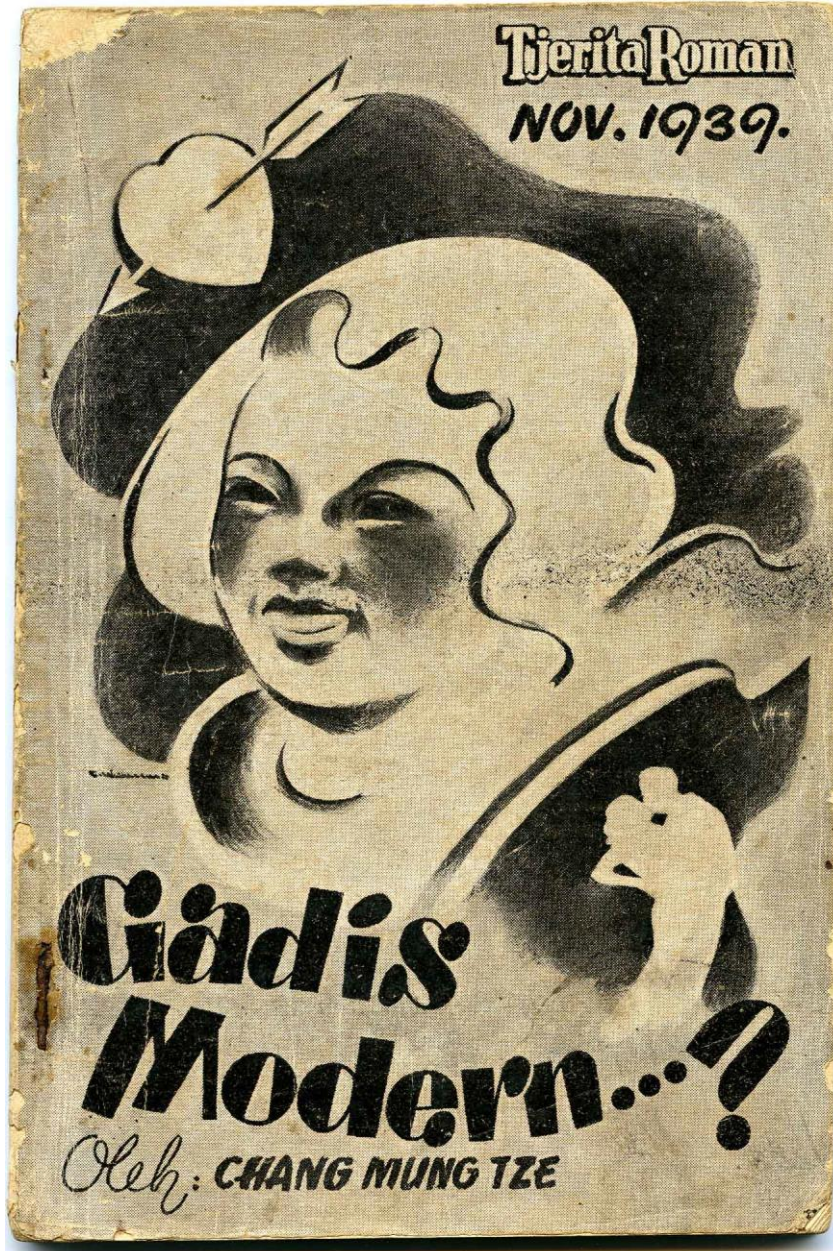


Figure 4.4. The cover of Chang Mung Tze's *Nona Modern?* (Modern Miss?). The cover title is *Gadis Modern....?* (Modern Girl....?), but on the interior title-page it is *Nona Modern*. *Tjerita Roman* published a new short novel every month. This was number 131, November 1939.

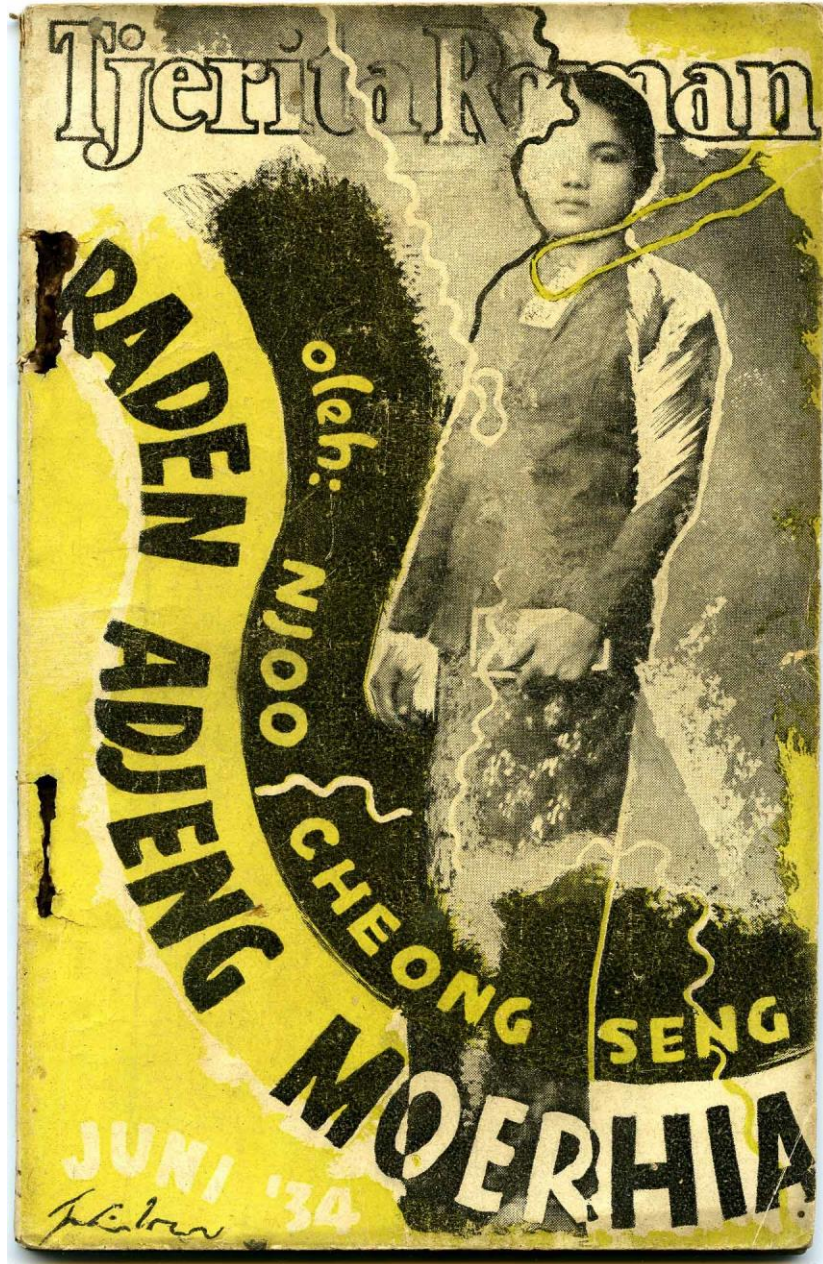


Figure 4.5. The cover of Njoo Cheong Seng's *R. A. Moerhia*. "R. A." stands for "Raden Adjeng" (spelled out in the cover-title, abbreviated on the interior title-page), an aristocratic title for unmarried women. *Tjerita Roman* 66, June 1934.

blame these modern pursuits for her downfall: her life is destroyed by her refusal to obey her father's restrictions on her association with young men.⁸⁹

Another popular novel, *R. A. Moerhia* by Njoo Cheong Seng (1934), has virtually the same plot situation—conservative father, “ultra-modern” (tennis-playing!) daughter—but here the family is Javanese and living in Medan, and the dénouement is different: the daughter marries a Dutchman, who deserts her. He returns to Holland and marries again. In the end Moerhia kills herself. (What else can a willful young woman in a Chinese-Malay novel do?) Here the central issue is not obedience but rather the accusation by Moerhia's family (who are nationalists) that she is forgetting her Indonesian-ness—forgetting that her skin is dark, her elder brother says—and becoming *gila-Blanda* (Dutch-crazy).⁹⁰

Nona Modern? and *R. A. Moerhia* exemplify what Claudine Salmon describes as the general ambivalence of pre-war Chinese-Indonesian novels towards modernity (phrased here as Westernization), particularly with regard to the emancipation of women:

Everything suggests that westernization was accepted when it brought with it technical improvements, or improvements in the economy and the realm of daily life, but that it created problems at the cultural level. . . . Westernization was considered dangerous when it affected women's status and their role in *peranakan* society. . . . Most of the authors would not resign themselves to accept the effects of Westernization as regards the social position of their wives and daughters (Salmon 1981:55-56).

The difference between popular music of the 1930s and the popular novels of the time is that the novels—those that were not simply sensationalist—were not *selling* the West at the

⁸⁹ I find this novel interesting because although the author sides with the girl's father, he is willing to show him as cold, rigid, and ultimately vindictive. Until the plunge into melodrama at the end, the novel depicts convincingly the way changing times can thrust people into conflicts they cannot find their way out of.

⁹⁰ The novel's epigraph is an Indonesian translation of Kipling's famous line beginning, “East is east and west is west.”

same time that they disparaged it. In contrast, radio and records in the 1930s got double duty out of modernity, simultaneously promoting it and claiming to deplore it. For media dependent on reaching as wide an audience as possible, this ambivalence, it seems to me, is suspiciously convenient.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4

Table 4.4. Nirom Westersche Programma – 28 days, August-September 1938

Table 4.5. Live music broadcasts on the Nirom Oostersche Programma
and three private ketimuran stations – Full year 1938

Additional song texts

**Table 4.4. NIROM WESTERSCHE PROGRAMMA – 28 DAYS
7 August – 3 September 1938**

<i>Genre & Ensemble</i>	<i># of broadcasts</i>		
	<i>#</i>	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>Total</i>
WESTERN CLASSICAL, LIGHT MUSIC, & DANCE MUSIC			
Omroep-Orkest / directed by Carel van der Bijl			
Concert [with soprano soloist]	1		
Concert	7		
Concert with Theo van der Pas (guest conductor) & Carel van Der Bijl, (violin soloist)	1		
Nederlandsch programma	1		
Speelt bij de thee	1		
Popular concert	7		
Feestprogramma [for Koninginnedag]	1		
Licht programma	1		
Compositions by Eric Coates	1		
Gevarieerde programma	1		
Matinee concert	4	26	
Studio-Orkest / directed by Carel van der Bijl			
Lunch concert	2		
Matinee concert	3		
Concert	3		
Vooravond concert	2		
Selecties	1	11	
Carel van der Bijl & zijn Quintet			
Matinee concert	2	2	
Carel van der Bijl Trio			
Lunch concert	3		
Speelt bij de thee	1		
[no description]	1	5	
Recitals			
Nicolai Graudan (vcl) & Hansi Freudberg (pno)	3		
Charles Etsord (mvoc) & Richard Schmidberger (pno)	1		
Nunu Alfes-Sanchioni (fvoc) & Richard Schmidberger (pno)	1		
Carel van der Bijl (vln) & Richard Schmidberger (pno)	1		
Tonia Drew-Hanson (fvoc) & Richard Schmidberger: Program of American & Norse liederen	1		
Mevr. G. Soekawati (fvoc) & Nunu Alfes-Sanchioni (pno)	1		
Theo van der Pas (pno)	2		
Mevr. E. Sibenius Trip (citer) [zither]	1		
Lucie Boon-Brune (harp)	1	12	

Nirom Quintet / directed by Boris Mariëff			
Concert	4		
Matinee concert	8		
Lunch concert	1		
Vooravond concert	2	15	
Foorman's Orchestra (Bandung)			
Lunch concert	2		
Concert	3		
[no description]	1	6	
Foorman's Band (Bandung)			
Dansmuziek	4		
Vooravond concert	1		
Concert	1		
Lunchmuziek	1	7	
Orkest van de Hotel des Indes (Batavia)			
Dansmuziek	5		
Lunchmuziek	2		
Popular concert	1		
Concert	4	12	
De Kwakers - Vocal concert	1	1	
Richard Schmidberger Trio	4	4	
Instrumental solos (various instruments) & small groups	6	6	
Tony's Band (Surabaya) / directed by Julius Tauster - Concert	1	1	
Dubbelmannenquartet Crescendo (Surabaya)	1	1	
Simon's Zigeuner-Ensemble - Hungarian music	1	1	
NIROM String Quartet [Haydn, op. 77 no. 1]	1	1	
Bataviasche Orkest-Vereeniging Toonkunst / directed by J. de Ruyter Korver, with Theo van der Pas, piano soloist	1	1	
Operetta duets - Jopie Dommers & Leo Morein	1	1	113
HAWAIIAN			
Hawaiian Big Boys	2	2	
De Hawaiian Entertainers	1	1	
Royal Hawaiians	2	2	5
CHILDREN'S PROGRAM?			
Het Arendsnest: Muziek, zang en voordracht door Arendssoog en zijn verkenners	4	4	4
MISC POPULAR			
De Caroline Crooners en Avalon Boys	1	1	1

Table 4.5. LIVE MUSIC BROADCASTS ON THE NIROM OOSTERSCHE PROGRAMMA (Batavia/Bandung & Surabaya) AND THREE PRIVATE KETIMURAN STATIONS (Batavia, Bandung, & Surakarta) FULL YEAR 1938

In a formula like (e.g.) 43(4), the number on the left shows the total number of broadcasts of the genre in question, while the number on the right, in parentheses, shows how many performing groups were heard in those broadcasts.

43(4) means that 4 different groups gave a total of 43 broadcasts of that genre on that station in 1938.

GENRE	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
ARABIC / MUSLIM					
Muslim religious: Maulud celebration, Rebana/Barzanji	1 (1)		4 (-)		1 (1)
Lagu Arab	2 (2)				
BALINESE					
Janger				3 (1)	
EUROPEAN/AMERICAN					
Accordion band, guitar solo/duo, triangle ensemble, harmonica band, misc. concerts, violin solo, military band	14 (6)	27 (8)	16 (3)	2 (1)	3 (2)
CABARET					
Performing group name in Dutch	1 (1)				
Performing group name in Malay	16 (3)				

	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
MALAY-LANGUAGE THEATER					
Radiotooneel ("radio theater") from BTV/BDG	11 (5)				
Comedy from BTV/BDG	1 (1)				
Opera Melajoe (=Bangsawan/Stamboel) from Medan	1 (1)				
GAMBUS & HARMONIUM					
Gambus Orkest (often mixing Lagu Arab, Chasidah, Lagu Melayu)	52 (10)	9 (5)	3 (2)	2 (1)	33 (2)
Harmonium Orkest	30 (2)	19 (6)		1 (1)	9 (1)
CHINESE					
Gambang Kromong & Pobin	43 (4)	11 (1)	2 (2)		
Yang Kim [=yang qin]	21 (1)		1 (1)		39 (1)
Chinese Modern	2 (1)		1 (1)	5 (1)	23 (1?2?)
Kroncong (Chinese)	28 (2)				
Wayang Orang (Chinese)	2 (1)				
Radiotooneel (Chinese)	6 (1)				
Chinese theater (probably Stambul, not Chinese Opera)	2 (1)				
Pat Im					15 (1?2?)
Broadcast from Societeit Chuan Ming Kong Hui (Solo)				11 (-)	1 (-)
Amoy music				4 (1)	
CENTRAL JAVANESE					
Central Javanese gamelan in BTV	15 (1? 2?)	36 (2)			
Central Javanese gamelan in BDG (performance)	28 (1)		13 (1)		
Central Javanese gamelan in BDG (instruction)			23 (1)		

	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
Central Javanese gamelan in BDG - wireng (male dance) instruction			21 (1)		
Central Javanese gamelan in Solo - from palaces & aristocratic residences	23 (4)		1 (1)	225 (7)	39 (6)
Central Javanese gamelan in Solo - excluding palaces etc.				55 (-)	6 (1)
Central Javanese gamelan - wireng (male dance) instruction - from palaces in Solo				96 (2)	
Central Javanese gamelan in Yogya	3 (2)		1 (1)	6 (5)	3 (1? 2?)
Central Javanese gamelan - gender+celempung / gender only				83 (1)	10 (1)
Central Javanese gamelan in SBY					11 (2)
Malam kesenian ["Arts night"] - Central Javanese gamelan & Wayang Orang scenes or Tayub demonstration					5 (1)
Central Javanese gamelan in BTV - gadhon [chamber group]	10 (1)				
Central Javanese gamelan music played by string groups (siteran, clempungan)	5 (3)		11 (1)	2 (2)	36 (2)
Macapat (performance)	8 (3)	19 (2)		15 (3)	56 (1)
Macapat (instruction)				76 (3)	43 (2)
Dolanan (children's songs)		1 (1)			
Kethoprak	3 (1)			34 (4)	14 (6)
Bancak Dhoyok		1 (1)			
Langendriyan		1 (1)		9 (1)	
Larasmadya				2 (1)	
Popular: Lagu2 Jawa	2 (1)				
Popular?: Blinden-Hof-Tokkel-Orkest (Tokkel-orkest oleh habdi dalem Orang Boeta)					4 (1)
Santiswaran from Solo			1 (1)		

	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
Wayang Orang from Solo or Yogya	18 (2)		1 (1)	26 (6)	18 (2)
Wayang Kulit (Central Javanese)	12 (4? 5?)	1 (1)	1 (1)	16 (1)	17 (4)
Misc theater (wayang & kethoprak scenes)				4 (-)	
Unspecified - live events (wedding, Oranje-feest, Societeit)				4 (-)	
Unspecified theater (wayang orang? Langendriyan?)					1 (1)
EAST JAVANESE					
East Javanese Gamelan					24 (1)
East Javanese Gamelan - wedding					1 (-)
Ludruk					14 (1)
Santiswaran					1 (1)
Wayang Krucil					12 (1)
Wayang Kulit (East Javanese)					12 (2)
Wayang Orang					2 (1)
Children's songs					1 (1)
SUNDANESE					
Gamelan Sunda in BTV	11 (1)	20 (2)	32 (11)		
Gamelan Sunda in BDG - from Kabupaten	16 (1)				
Gamelan Sunda in BDG - from outside Kabupaten	17 (3)				
Sekar Gending			2 (1)		
Bobodoran	9 (1)				
Calung	9 (1)				
Degung	10 (1)		9 (1)		
Pantun	8 (4)	4 (2)	12 (6)		
Pentja	1 (1)		10 (2)		

	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
Radiotoneel ("radio theater")	1 (1)				
Theater (Gending Karesmen)			2 (2)		
Tarawangsa	1 (1)				
Tembang Sunda with kacapi and rebab or suling	68 (12?13?)	24 (6)	47 (16)		7 (1)
Kacapi Modern	22 (2)		3 (1)		
Celepungan	5 (2)		10 (2)		
Sawer Penganten			1 (1)		
Terbangan	1 (1)				
Wawacan	1 (1)	25 (1)			
Unspecified (gamelan? tembang?)	11 (4)	2 (1)	1 (1)		
Wayang Golek	29 (5)		17 (9)		
Lecture demonstration on Sundanese music			1 (1)		
HAWAIIAN					
Hawaiian (some with "lagoe2 Hawaiian extra dan krontjong modern" or "lagoe2 Hawaiian Timoer dan Hawaiian Barat") - independent groups	57 (11)	29 (12)	29 (16)	77 (16)	34 (6)
Hawaiian (as above) - NIROM studio group	6 (1)				
Hawaiian Concours (=competition)		1 (-)	1 (-)		
KRONCONG					
Kroncong (usually with stambul; sometimes also with European songs, Indonesian regional songs, Hawaiian or celepung) - independent groups	68 (15)	134 (15)	21 (4)	47 (18)	78 (5)
Kroncong (as above - NIROM studio group)	31 (1)				
Kroncong Concours (=competition)		1 (-)	1 (-)		

	NIROM BTV/BDG	VORO BTV	VORL BDG	SRV Solo	NIROM SBY
AMBON & MENADO					
Lagu Ambon & Menado (sometimes also Timor)	10 (2)	1 (1)			8 (4)
Lagu Sangir	1 (1)				
SUMATRA					
Lagu Minang (also some Melayu)	29 (3)	22 (1)			
Lagu Melayu (also some Minang & Arab) - independent groups	34 (7)				4 (1)
Lagu Melayu (as above) - NIROM studio group	5 (1)				
Lagu Batak & Sumatra	13 (1)				18 (1)
MISCELLANEOUS					
Popular (unspecified but definitely including kroncong)	165 (1)	11 (1)			
Lagu Hindustan		1 (1)			
Popular (or Tembang Sunda?) Concours (=competition)	1 (-)				
Groot Nirom Revue Ketimoeran ("Great NIROM Eastern Revue") (with Studio Orkes, kroncong, harmonium, bobodoran, tooneel)	1 (-)				
UNSPECIFIED					
Pidato & musik ("speech [=oration? lecture?] and music")					1 (-)
Unspecified - live events			2 (-)		
Perkoempoelan Poetri Rosary (Catholic devotional music?)				2 (1)	
Trio Tjempakapoetih (kroncong? popular?)		13 (1)			

ADDITIONAL SONG TEXTS

MODERN GIRLS & WOMEN

Boeanja Pergaoelan / The Fruits of Association

Paso Doble Krontjong – HMV NS 381, issued April 1938

S. Pramoe & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Di djaman modern poenja pergaoelan
Gadis gadis dapet kamerdikahan
Setiap hari djalan djalan
Banjak lelaki djadi kenalan.

In today's way of association
Girls have freedom
Every day they walk around
They become acquainted with many men.

Ta taoenja itoe perboeatan
Djikaloé sampe djadi kliwatan
Bisa mendapet godahan setan
Jang bikin ia dapet penjeselan.

They don't see that that behavior
If it goes beyond the boundaries
Can become the temptation of the devil
That will give them cause for regret.

Gadis Djaman Sekarang / Girls Today

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 379, issued April 1938

Miss Roeslin & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Nasibnja gadis djaman sekarang
Toenangan tjepet perkawinan djarang

The fate of girls today
Engagements come quickly but weddings
are rare

Terbitnja tjinta dateng sembarang
Maka banjak jang masoek djoerang.

They fall in love indiscriminately
And that's why many fall in the pit.

Sasoeda si gadis diadjak ider-ideran
Sesoeda djedjaka kenjang boeat permainan
Di sitoe baroe timboel penjeselan
Dari lelaki poenja katjoerangan

After the girl is invited to go around
After the guy has his fill of playing
That's when regret begins
About the deceitfulness of men.

Prampoean dan Mode / Women and Fashion

Tango Krontjong - H.M.V. NS 394, issued May 1938

Miss Jacoba Regar & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Soeda tabeatnja kaoem prampoean
Sanget soeka pada pakean.

It's become the nature of women
To care a great deal about clothes.

Kedjer mode jang baroe
Jang dianggep paling perloe.

Chasing the new fashion
Is considered the most important thing.

Kerna ingin toeroet mode jang baroe
Segala apa maoe ditiroe.

Because they want to follow the new fashion
They will imitate everything.

Ini tjara djangan diboeroe
Sebab bisa djadi kliroe.

Don't try to be like them
Because it can lead you into error.

HARD TIMES

Tempo Soesah / Hard Times

Lagoe Extra Melajoe Java – H.M.V. NS 462, issued September 1938

Miss Moedjena

Tjoba pikir dan rasa-rasa
Pengahidoepan sekarang bertambah soesah
Memang sekarang djaman malaisa
Robahlah pikiran seberapa bisa.

Just think about it and feel it
Life today is getting harder
Indeed we are now in a Depression
Change your thinking as best you can.

Begini rasa orang tidak beroentoeng
Waktoe soesah tidak jang menoeloeng
Tjari hidoep sampai loentang lantoeng
Nasib djelek sampai pakai badjoe boentoeng.

It seems like no one has good fortune
In times of trouble no one will help
You look for work and can't find anything
Your luck is so bad you're dressed in rags.

SEXUAL LICENSE

Malam2 di Tanjung Priok / Nights in Tanjung Priok

Krontjong – HMV NS 662, issued July 1940

Mohd. Yatim & the H.M.V. Band

Waktu terang bulan jalan di Tanjung Periuk	If you go walking in Tanjung Priok in the moonlight
Tentulah satu malam ta' bisa jadi ngantuk	You certainly won't be sleepy the whole night
Terdengar sayup-sayup bunyi kroncong serta gitar	You'll hear the quiet sounds of the <i>kroncong</i> lute and guitar
Kedengaran suara orang nyanyi	You'll hear someone singing
Sungguh asyik kita dengar	It's truly lovely to hear
Di tepi laut ramai sungguh	At the edge of the sea there's a lot of action
Bunyi gelombang serta ombak-ombak	The sound of the waves pounding
Kedengeran sampai jauh	Is heard from afar.
Banyak orang jalan-jalan sama pacar bergandengan	Many people walk hand-in-hand with their sweethearts
Ada yang memeluk kekasihnya tengah jalan	Some people embrace right out in the street
Jikalau taksi liwat penuh dengan orang plesir	Taxis go by full of people having fun
Bunga-bunga tentu keluar banyak	Many flowers [=prostitutes] come out
Tuan tuan mari mampir	"Come on, mister, come visit me."
Sinarnya bulan sangat terang	The moonlight is very bright
Pergi suruhannya maha esa	We ignore the command of God
Lupakan lah susah orang.	And forget other people's troubles.

Kepaloeannja Orang Lelaki / The Dishonesty of Men

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 396, issued May 1938

Miss Room & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Kepaloeannja orang lelaki	The falseness of men
Boeat main soeka sekali	They are happy to play around
Boeat kawin merasa ngeri	But shiver at the thought of marriage
Segala apa maoe menang sendiri.	They just want their own way in everything.
Orang lelaki djaman sekarang	Men today
Kaloe maoe pikat gadis kaliatan garang.	When they want to get a girl they seem intense
Atoer boedjoekan sebagai dikarang	Their persuasions are like poetry
Soeda bosen perhatian koerang.	But once they're bored their attention fades.

VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY

Boeroeng Koetlang / The Songbird

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 380, issued April 1938
Miss Soepiah & the H.M.V. Orchestra

Moesin rendeng soeda ampir sampe temponja
Boeroeng koetlang terbang dari saranja
Di oedara jang lebar zonder watesnja
Merdika dan roekoen pengidoepannja.

The rainy season is almost here
The *kutilang* songbird flies from its nest
In the vast unbounded sky
Its life is free and peaceful

Berbeda dengan kita jang hidoep di boemi
Saling memboenoh ta maoe dami
Banjak djoega jang djadi tjoemi tjoemi
Saling bereboet boeat semangkok nasi.

Unlike us who live on the earth
Killing each other and unwilling to make peace
And many who become like animals
Fighting each other for a bowl of rice.

Kekedjaman Doenia / The Cruelty of the World

Tango Krontjong – HMV NS 474, issued Oct 1938
Miss Jem [=Miss Ijem]

Oh doenia alangkah permainja engkau poenja
roman
Laoetan goenoeng kota-kota indah kamoe
sediakan
Tempat orang plezier dan mentjari kesenangan
Semoea serba indah sedjoek dan njaman.

Oh world, how pretty your face looks
Oceans, mountains, beautiful cities you
offer
Places for people to have fun and
find pleasure
Everything is beautiful, fresh, and pleasant.

Tetapi kalau dipreksa lebih djaoeh lagi
Soenggoeh hatikoe berdebar dan amat ngeri
sekali
Segala keindahan kamoe hilang sama sekali
Karena kekedjeman doenia jang soenggoeh
menakoeti.

But if you are examined more closely
My heart pounds and I am terrified
All of your beauty vanishes
Because the cruelty of the world is truly
frightening.

DUNIA FANA (The transient world)

Djalannja Pengidoepan / The Course of Life

Waltz Krontjong – HMV NS 409, issued June 1938

S. Abdullah & H.M.V. Orchestra

Apa adanja djalanan penghidoepan
Dari kita manoesia dalem doenia fana
Apa jang kita taroh harepan
Gampang sekali moesna.

What is the course of life
For people in this transient world
The things we put our hope in
Are very easily destroyed

Apa jang kita paling hargaken
Gampang sekali boeat linjap kombali.
Kasoekeran soesa ditjeritaken
Kasenengan ta bisa dibeli.

The things we most value
Very easily vanish again
Our troubles are hard to relate
Happiness cannot be bought.

Djalannja Doenia / The Way of the World

Slowfox Krontjong – HMV NS 350, issued February 1938

Miss Room & the "His Master's Voice" Orchestra

Dasarnja doenia ada bersifat fana
Tida ada barang jang tinggal kekel
Djarang jang bisa tetep serta sampoerna
Lekas sekali kita menjesel

The world is truly transient
Nothing is permanent
Rarely can anything be fixed and perfect
Very soon we regret.

Tetapi haroes djangan djengkelin hati dimoeka

But we should not let our disappointment
show

Kabroentoengan di depan lekas kita trima
Satoe antara lain saling bersoeka
Ada kaperloean jang teroetama

Good luck in the future we will accept
To like one another
Is the foremost need.

CHAPTER 5

***KRONCONG* REVISITED: NEW EVIDENCE FROM OLD SOURCES**

This chapter looks at *kroncong*, the most prominent type of popular music in Indonesia in the first half of the twentieth century and one that is still heard, albeit less frequently, today. Though much of its history is elusive, some elements of *kroncong* apparently derive from Portuguese music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First outlined in an important but musically sketchy early report by A. Th. Manusama (1919), the Portuguese connection was further explored by Bronia Kornhauser (1978), Tilman Seebass (1997 [1986]), Margaret Kartomi (1997), and Victorious Ganap (2006). Kornhauser's careful study is also the seminal account of twentieth-century *kroncong* music, which has also been discussed by Kusbini (1972), Judith Becker (1975), Ernst Heins (1975), and Harmunah (1994 [1987]). But in their descriptions of *kroncong* performance, all of these works after Manusama have been limited to the practice at the time of their writing;¹ none of the authors had access to the evidence contained in commercial 78-rpm records of *kroncong* made before World War II, nor was the secondary evidence of newspaper accounts of and advertisements for *kroncong* performances in the late colonial era readily accessible. Thus discussions of *kroncong* have tended largely to leap from the seventeenth century to the 1950s, with no treatment of the 18th and 19th centuries (understandably, since there seems to be almost no documentation available) and skimpy

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¹ Kusbini's article is a partial exception, since he includes brief allusions to his own experience of *kroncong* before the 1950s (he was born in 1910, according to Sri Sutjiatiningsih 1994:159), but these references are insubstantial.

coverage of the years 1900–42, which were the heyday of *kroncong*. While the late colonial sources I draw on here do not radically revise the overall outline of what we know of *kroncong*, they allow us to rectify errors and clarify confusions, and they offer abundant, hitherto inaccessible detail about the practice of *kroncong* in its prime.

This chapter first summarizes *kroncong*'s history and musical characteristics, drawing on what has already been established by other writers and amending and supplementing it from the “new old” sources. It then proceeds to fill in some of the picture of *kroncong* in the first half of the twentieth century, drawing largely on the evidence provided by the 78s.

Preliminaries, 1: the term *kroncong*

The term *kroncong* is used in several distinct senses.² In the nineteenth century (and perhaps in the eighteenth) its primary referent was a four- or five-stringed plucked lute, shaped like a small guitar; the name is probably onomatopoeia for the sound of strumming.³ This instrument, like its close cousin the ukulele, is descended from the Portuguese *cavaquinho*. I shall refer to it here as the “*kroncong* lute.” In the twentieth century the term continued to designate the lute, but it was also extended to refer variously to the ensemble the lute (or its substitute, the ukulele) plays in (*orkes kroncong*), that ensemble's typical repertoire (*lagu*

² And occurs in many spellings: *kroncong* or *keroncong* today (*c* pronounced as *ch* in English or *tj* in Dutch); *krontjong* or *kerontjong* before the Indonesian spelling reform of 1972. *Kronchong*, *keronchong*, and *krongchong* are Malay variants. Occasionally one finds *kronjong*, *kronjong*, *kerongong*, and *krontjoeng*, but these seem simply wrong. My practice is to follow modern spelling when writing in my own voice or translating a passage, but to use spelling “as is” for quotations and book and record titles from 1972 and before.

³ Other onomatopoeic etymologies for the name *kroncong* are offered by Seebass (1997:240), who believes it imitates the sound of ankle bells worn by dancers, and de Haan (1935 1:408), who derives it from the metal jingles on a tambourine. The lute is thought to have been played for dancers and is known (from a 1714 painting described by de Haan) to have been played with tambourine. Both authors propose that after their candidate for the original *kroncong* instrument (ankle bells or tambourine) fell into disuse, the term was transferred to the lute.

kroncong), specific items within that repertoire (*Kroncong Morisko*, *Kroncong Kemayoran*, etc.), and the musical idiom (*irama kroncong*) now commonly associated with that ensemble and repertoire.

Apart from the phrase “*kroncong lute*,” I shall use *kroncong* to refer to the complex of repertoire and performance practice that one would expect to hear at an event described as a *kroncong* performance or in a recording or broadcast described as *kroncong*. Historically, there are three such complexes, plus a preliminary one, which I shall call *folk kroncong*, which predates both recordings and formalized *kroncong* events. In that preliminary stage, *kroncong* was an urban folk music, performed by non-specialists, with no media dissemination and little or no financial reward to performers. The second complex, *popular kroncong*, encompasses the varieties of *kroncong* that flourished in the first four decades of the twentieth century, including a period of transition from folk music to popular music in the years before ca. 1918. (I identify three phases within the *popular kroncong* stage: 1900 to 1924, 1924 to 1935, and 1935 to the end of the colonial era in 1942.) The third complex, *standard kroncong*, is characterized by the largely fixed repertoire, instrumentation, and idiom that became normative around 1950. Finally there is a fourth complex, which we might call *late kroncong*, where music from any repertoire may be termed *kroncong* if it is played in an approximation of the standardized idiom and instrumentation. One finds, for example, recordings described as *Beatles kroncong*, *pop kroncong*, and *kroncong dangdut*. I shall discuss late *kroncong* in the next chapter.

The term *kroncong* will also be used here in the Indonesian-language names of repertoire or style classifications (*kroncong asli*, *langgam kroncong*, *pop kroncong*, *kroncong beat*).

Preliminaries, 2: standard *kroncong*

What is generally understood today as *kroncong*—and what was described as *kroncong* by the writers I named in the first paragraph (other than Manusama)—is what I call *standard kroncong*. The basic instrumentation is voice, violin, flute, two small plucked lutes (ukulele, mandolin, banjo), guitar, and cello. (The early tambourine and the eponymous lute have fallen out of the ensemble.) Other European instruments (string bass, piano, etc.) may be added to this core.

Here are the elements of the standard *kroncong* idiom:⁴

- the violin, flute, and voice carry the main melody heterophonically, with considerable fluidity and rhythmic freedom that contrast with the strict tempo and rapid subdivision of the other instruments. Violin and flute fill gaps in the vocal.
- the guitar plays mainly steady “walking” figuration, ranging through several octaves, to elaborate the chord sequence.
- the small plucked lutes play in an upper-register alternation commonly referred to as *cak-cuk*, where *cuk* is on the beat and *cak* is off. They may play single tones or chords. Rhythmically more complex interlocking patterns, still called *cak-cuk*, also occur.
- the cello plays rapid, rhythmically animated pizzicato patterns that contrast both with the steady flow of *cak-cuk* and the walking guitar and with the freer violin, flute, and vocal lines. The cello part resembles the drumming of Javanese and Sundanese gamelan music and the lively role of the low-register zither in Sundanese *panambih* and *kacapi-suling* music for strings, voice, and flute. The cello patterns (or the tones of the string bass, if it is present) also serve to outline the chord sequence.

Seen from one angle, this standard *kroncong* idiom is an instance of the basic format of Euro-American popular song: a foregrounded vocal given harmonized accompaniment by an ensemble of European instruments. From another angle, however, the pizzicato “cello drum”

⁴ A more detailed description is found in Kornhauser (1978:137-43).

and the rapid upper-register *cak-cuk* figuration over free-flowing mid-range melody resemble typical elements of Javanese and Sundanese traditional music. It is this dual character of the idiom that leads people to call *kroncong* a musical hybrid or synthesis of European and Indonesian musical traits.⁵

The repertoire of standard *kroncong* is commonly divided into several classifications: *kroncong asli* (“true” or “original” *kroncong*);⁶ the later *langgam kroncong* (“*kroncong* songs of the *langgam* type”), which emerged around 1940;⁷ *lagu stambul* (“melodies from the *stambul* theater”); *langgam jawa* (“Javanese *langgam*”); and a catchall category (called *kroncong beat* in the 1970s, and now called *pop kroncong*) for anything played in the standard *kroncong* idiom and instrumentation that does not fit into the other categories. These categories are still functional today: on CDs of *kroncong* (which now are aimed mainly at the nostalgia market), the title of each selection typically begins with an abbreviation identifying the song as *kroncong* (for *kroncong asli* only), *langgam*, or *stambul*. (See Figure 5.1.)

⁵ Kornhauser (1978:104-6,176-77) calls it a “hybrid,” a “synthesis,” and a “syncretic” music; her article is titled “In defence of *kroncong*” because she feels it necessary to defend the music against the charge of hybrid “degeneracy” leveled by Jaap Kunst. See also Heins 1975.

⁶ This is a retronym, like *analog wristwatch* or *acoustic guitar*—a term that emerges only when it becomes necessary to distinguish an earlier, formerly unmarked form (*wristwatch*, *guitar*) from a later development (*digital wristwatch*, *electric guitar*). Ordinary, unmodified *kroncong* became *asli* only when people needed to differentiate the older style from the newer *kroncong rumba*, *kroncong tango*, *kroncong blues*, etc., of the second half of the 1930s; the modified term also served to distinguish the older song form from *langgam kroncong*. The earliest use of “*kroncong asli*” that I have seen is in a NIROM program guide listing for a broadcast on 5 December 1938.

⁷ *Langgam* is used in three senses: in a very general way, to mean simply “melody” (synonymous with *lagu*); in a more specific way, to mean a melody or song associated either in form or origin with Western popular music (Amir Pasaribu seems to use it in this sense in footnote 75 below); and, most commonly and precisely, to designate songs with the structure common in Euro-American popular songs of the 1920s and later (four 8-bar phrases with melodic material in the pattern AABA; for short, this is called the “AABA” form) or, less commonly, with other similar structures built on melodic repetition (AABB, AABCBC). In the latter two senses, *langgam*, by virtue of their associations with foreign popular music, seemed, in the late 1930s and after, more modern and cosmopolitan than *kroncong asli*, and hence had greater cachet than the older form. Kusbini (1972:32) states that among the oldest *langgam kroncong* (his example of which is *Bengawan Solo*, a song in AABA form) is *Bintang Surabaya*, which he recalls hearing in 1924. I have heard a version of this song, recorded in late 1926 or early 1927 (His Master’s Voice N 2033). While it is definitely not a *kroncong asli*, neither is it strictly a *langgam kroncong*, as it lacks the AABA structure.



Figure 5.1. A 2006 CD titled *Keroncong Asli* featuring the singer Toto Salmon. The piece listing, printed on the CD, demonstrates the continued use of terms identifying the song forms: Kr. for *kroncong*, Lgm. for *langgam*, Stb. for *stambul*. Notice also the age and attire of the singer, which suggest the nature of the target audience.

The classifications *kroncong asli* and *langgam kroncong* designate distinct song forms or harmonic-melodic structures. In most contemporary analyses, *kroncong asli* is described as a 28-bar song form, but this analysis is incorrect: *kroncong asli* was initially a 16-bar and later a 32-bar form.⁸ It contains, along with the standard I-V-I and I-IV-V-I chord progressions ubiquitous in Western popular music, two more distinctive harmonic passages: an emphatic

⁸ For the 28-bar analysis, see Kornhauser 1978:150, Harmunah 1994:17, Kusbini 1972:21, Any 1983:80, or Kartomi 1998:58-60—but not, I am happy to say, Yampolsky 1991 or Mack 2004:37. It is not poor transcription that has led so many scholars to accept the 28-bar schema, but rather a focus on the vocal melody at the expense of the overall form. The vocal melody of *kroncong* after ca. 1925 is indeed typically 28 bars long, but *kroncong* is a strophic song, and before starting the next strophe the singer must wait *another four bars*. The turnaround brings the total length of the strophe to 32 bars. One consequence of the hegemony of the 28-bar analysis is that the well-known *Kroncong Kemayoran* is seen as a structural anomaly, since it is not 28 (or 14) but rather 16 bars long (Kornhauser 1978:153-54, Kusbini 1972:37-40). In fact, *Kroncong Kemayoran* is simply a rare instance in the contemporary repertoire of a song conventionally played in the older uptempo style of *kroncong*.

movement from dominant (V) to the major supertonic (II, which can be analyzed as a “secondary dominant” or “V of V”) and back to dominant, and an extended excursion into the subdominant (IV). The *kroncong asli* form is distinguished not by an illusory 28-bar length, but by these two relatively nonstandard harmonic passages, together with a characteristic placement of text vis-à-vis melody and the absence of internal melodic repetition (until ca. 1935, when limited repetition is introduced). The most typical kind of *langgam kroncong*, on the other hand, is also a 32-bar form, but it has internal melodic repeats in the AABA pattern characteristic of many Euro-American popular songs, and it does not linger in either the supertonic/secondary-dominant or the subdominant regions. Other forms with internal repetition (AABB, for example) may also be termed *langgam kroncong*.

Lagu stambul are melodies originally associated with the *stambul* theater. *Stambul* emerged in Indonesia in the early 1890s as an eclectic entertainment offering stories from the Arabian Nights, Shakespeare, and Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, Malay, and Javanese tales, all performed in Malay with large casts and the apparatus of European popular theater (painted backdrops, costumes, spectacular effects). Music was incorporated into some scenes, with the performers singing in character; and dances, songs, and “vaudeville” or “cabaret” acts were performed as entr’actes. There were many *stambul* songs—probably any popular song of the day could be worked in—but there was also a series of numbered tunes specifically associated with the theater: *Stambul I*, *Stambul II*, etc. (The highest I know is *Stambul XII*.) Two of these, *Stambul I* and *Stambul II*, were generalized and became song forms. When the *stambul* theater began to modernize in the mid-1920s, most of the numbered *lagu stambul* died out, leaving

only *stambul II* and, to a lesser extent, *stambul I* in use.⁹ These remnants survive today in the repertoire of *kroncong* groups, although their formal structures are neither those of *kroncong asli* or *langgam kroncong*.

Langgam jawa stands farther apart. Because it shares the instrumentation of standard *kroncong*, it is often classed as *kroncong*, but in fact its tuning (an equal-tempered approximation of the *pelog* tuning system of Javanese gamelan music) and the language of its lyrics (Javanese rather than Indonesian) mark it as quite distinct. As its name indicates, it uses AABA and other *langgam* structures rather than that of *kroncong asli*. While there was at least one precursor in the 1920s and '30s,¹⁰ *langgam jawa* seems to have developed as an extensive repertoire only in the 1950s. It was associated with Surakarta, in Central Java, and with the prolific composer Andjar Any (1936-2008).

Nowadays, a standard *kroncong* ensemble is likely to play a mixed repertoire of a few *kroncong asli*, one or two *lagu stambul* (mostly *II*, occasionally *I*), some *langgam kroncong*, and popular or folk tunes arranged in *kroncong* idiom. Probably the best-known *kroncong asli*—the

⁹ Although the modernized theater after the mid-1920s was commonly called *opera* or *toneel* (the Dutch word for theater) rather than *stambul*, record companies continued to issue songs characterized on the record label as *stamboel*. When the word “*Stamboel*” appears in the title of a song, we may assume that the song is structurally a *stambul I* or *stambul II*. But frequently “*stamboel*” appears on the label as a *description* of the song, not an element of the title. In such cases the song is very often *not* structurally a *stambul*. Consider, for example, the song *Sussie* (HMV N 2758, issued 1929), which is identified on the label as “*stamboel*”: its melody is that of the 1925 American hit *If You Knew Susie Like I Know Susie*. The descriptor “*stamboel*” did not indicate a formal category, but rather signaled that the recordings contained popular songs of the sort that could be heard in the “vaudeville” or “cabaret” or “extra turn” entr’actes in the theater of the time, even though that theater might no longer be called *stambul*. For the early history of the *stambul* theater and the closely related *bangsawan* theater, see Cohen 2001, 2002, and 2006, and Tan 1993.

¹⁰ The precursor was a song called *kembang kacang*. Kusbini, who sees it as the origin of *langgam jawa*, reports (1972:34) that he heard it in Surabaya in 1924; although the scale was “*kwasi-pelog*” (“quasi-*pelog*”), the song was “in the realm of *kroncong*” (*dalam wilajah krontjong*) and used *kroncong* instrumentation along with a Javanese drum (*kendhang*). It may well have been a version of the Javanese gamelan piece *Kembang Kacang*. That there were occasional *Concours Kembang Kacang* (*kembang kacang* competitions)—one was announced in the Surabaya newspaper *Sin Tit Po* for 11 February 1930, to take place in Surakarta on 21 February—further suggests that it could be done in different manners. Perhaps the Javanese melody was generalized to become a song form like *kroncong asli* or *stambul II*.

only ones most people could name—are *Kroncong Morisko* and *Kroncong Kemayoran*; their counterpart in the *langgam kroncong* category is *Bengawan Solo* (composed in 1940).¹¹ *Langgam jawa* ensembles may possibly play some items from the standard *kroncong* repertoire but specialize in the separate repertoire of *langgam jawa*.

Preliminaries, 3: Recording in Indonesia, 1903-1942

A quick recap of the material presented in chapters 2 and 3:

I break down the entire “78 era” in DEI (and, later, Indonesia) into four phases. The first phase begins with the initial commercial recordings of Indonesian music, made in Singapore (with performers from Semarang) in May 1903 by Fred Gaisberg of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd of London. Other European and American companies followed suit, and one Dutch-owned label was established in Batavia. This period ends with the First World War, which so disrupted international transportation that both recording tours and the import of records into Indonesia largely ceased.¹²

The second phase of recording begins in 1925, after a break of ten years or longer. Two Indonesian labels started early in this period, and European companies returned in force or entered the Indonesian market for the first time.

The division between the second and third phases is less clear, since it is not marked by a hiatus; but in 1935 several of the major European labels closed out long-running issue series (the recording-industry equivalent of a product line) and inaugurated new ones with somewhat

¹¹ For much more on this song, see Kartomi 1998.

¹² No records were pressed in Indonesia before the 1950s. Until that time, recorded masters were shipped abroad for pressing, and the finished records were shipped back to Indonesia for sale.

different emphases. Also in this period a number of new Indonesian companies began production, and recording activity extended to new geographical regions (Sumatra, Makasar, Banyuwangi). The colonial phases of the 78 era came to an end in 1942 with the Japanese occupation of Indonesia and the expulsion of the Dutch. After World War II, no European record companies returned to Indonesia, and none of the earlier Indonesian companies survived the War and subsequent Revolution. The fourth and final phase of 78 production belongs to new Indonesian companies (most prominently Lokananta and Irama) that issued 78s in the 1950s and '60s, but these do not come into the discussion here.¹³

I estimate that some 18,400 distinct 78-rpm recordings were issued for DEI before 1942.¹⁴ (One recording, in my terms, equals one side of a 78-rpm disc; double-sided discs, the norm in Indonesia from ca. 1907, contain two recordings.) I have discographical information of varying completeness for over 13,300 of these recordings, 72.5% of the estimated total; these are the “known” records in Table 5.1 below. The information has been compiled from record company catalogues, newspapers advertisements, and my listings of 78s in public and private collections.

The companies recorded anything they thought would sell. Of the “known” DEI recordings, the largest category was popular songs (including *kroncong* and *stambul*), and the next largest was Javanese gamelan music and theater (mostly *wayang wong*). Music of the Chinese-Indonesians, Sundanese music, and Muslim religious records (Qur’anic recitation and devotional songs) were other important categories. Unfortunately, while it is possible (though

¹³ Lokananta’s production of 78s is discussed in Yampolsky 1987.

¹⁴ If the Malayan and Straits Settlements markets were included along with DEI, the estimate would be around 27,700.

complicated) to estimate the total quantity of production, and one can tabulate the *known* records by genre (if one can hear them or can classify them by some piece of information on the label or in an advertisement), there is no way to determine what kind of music or theater is on the *unknown* records. For this reason, I am unable to estimate the total number of *kroncong* and *stambul* recordings made before 1942; the best I can do is to show how many I have identified (with varying degrees of certainty).

	<i>Recordings for DEI (estimate)</i>	<i>Recordings for DEI (known)</i>	<i>Popular music (known)</i>	<i>Kroncong asli</i>	<i>Music for Stambul & Opera</i>	<i>Other popular music</i>
1903-17	5,508	3,626	1,062	124 (12%)	424 (39%)	514 (48%)
1925-35	7,528	5,904	2,319	687 (30%)	543 (23%)	1,089 (47%)
1936-42	5,347	3,808	1,745	737 (42%)	110 (6%)	898 (51%)
Total	18,383	13,338	5,126	1,548 (30%)	1,077 (21%)	2,501 (49%)

Table 5.1. *Gramophone records for the DEI (Indonesian) market, 1903-42. Percentages refer to the figure on the same line in the “Popular music (known)” column.*

Table 5.1 attempts to situate *kroncong* recordings within the DEI recording industry as a whole and within the category of popular music.¹⁵ Two categories are isolated: *kroncong asli* (but not other music that might have been labeled *kroncong*), and music for the *stambul*

¹⁵ For the purposes of Table 5.1 only, “popular music” may be given an *ad hoc* definition as music played on European instruments and sung in Malay/Indonesian or in languages from outside Indonesia. Recordings that appear to be aimed primarily at the Melayu (Malay) ethnic group of Sumatra, or at people from Ambon and Maluku, are not included in Table 5.1, although those groups speak forms of Malay. Recordings played on European instruments but sung in Indonesian languages other than Malay/Indonesian, or in Arabic, are not included, although musically some would fall into the popular music category. I am not aware of any *kroncong* sung in Arabic.

theater and its successor *opera*.¹⁶ These were by no means the only forms of popular music in the DEI. The “other popular music” column covers military marches, waltzes and other dance tunes, miscellaneous songs in Dutch and Malay/Indonesian (not explicitly connected to *stambul* or *opera*), and (particularly in the 1930s) “Hawaiian” music, sung in English, Hawaiian, or Malay/Indonesian.

Although the quantities in the four right-hand columns are necessarily tentative—as more records become “known” both the quantities and the percentages may change—the figure serves to illustrate the rapid rise of *kroncong* to a dominant position in Indonesian popular music. Bear in mind that the *kroncong* quantities here refer to a single song form. The quantities for *stambul* and *opera* music, in contrast, refer to a heterogeneous category that includes not only the numbered *stambul* melodies, with their various structures, but also any popular song or dance tune that a theater troupe might include in its cabaret entr’actes. Thus *kroncong* was not only a dominant genre in Indonesian popular music but an inescapable harmonic-melodic pattern. (Imagine if *I Got Rhythm* were the *only* set of changes available to jazz musicians.)

A final observation on Table 5.1: the apparently precipitous decline of theater music after 1935 seems to me to be mainly a matter of marketing. Live performances of *opera* or *toneel* (another name for the same thing) were still very popular with audiences in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but fewer and fewer records were issued in their name. Songs that

¹⁶ The “*stambul* and *opera*” figures in Table 5.1 include any sides with *stambul* or *opera* in the title or the descriptor, as well as any where the soloist is identified as belonging to a *stambul* or *opera* troupe, or where the performing group itself is identified as being such a troupe. Songs identified as *kroncong* are excluded from this count, as they are shown in a different column. As for songs with *stambul* or *opera* explicitly stated in the title or descriptor—a subcategory of the “music for *stambul* and *opera*” category—here are the figures: 102 of the 424 for 1903-17; 188 of the 543 for 1925-35; and 46 of the 110 for 1935-42

formerly would have been labeled *stambul* or shown as performed by a *stambul* or other theater troupe were now for the most part simply marketed as popular music.

5.1. Early *kroncong*

Origins

It is generally accepted that certain of the components of what is now called *kroncong* were introduced into Indonesia by sailors on the Portuguese ships that came to the islands in the sixteenth century in search of spices. While some of these sailors may have been white Europeans, most were “black Portuguese”—i.e., freemen and slaves from stations of the Portuguese trading empire in Africa, India, and the Malay Peninsula, who had assimilated elements of Portuguese language and culture and had become Catholic.¹⁷ Over the course of the seventeenth century, the Dutch established themselves in the archipelago, pushing out the Portuguese. Many Black Portuguese, however, remained in Batavia, the town that became, after 1619, the capital of the Dutch East Indies. Those who had been free to begin with or had been freed by their Portuguese owners became known as *Mardijkers* (“free persons”); others became free under the Dutch and joined the group. Thus the original *Mardijkers* were for the most part “freed slaves of non-Indonesian descent”; they were also “baptismal members of the [Dutch] Reformed Church,” since the Dutch, at war with two Catholic nations (Spain and

¹⁷ Rouffaer (1919:453) reserves “black Portuguese” for the “mestizos of Central Timor,” and Seebass (1996:233) follows Rouffaer. Abdurachman (1975:90), however, uses the term more broadly, referring to the non-European slaves and crewmen who came with the Portuguese, and I follow her usage.

Portugal) in the one century, had obliged them to become Protestant.¹⁸ Later other groups of free(d) persons were absorbed into the Mardijkers.

Speaking creolized Portuguese, Mardijkers remained a distinct cultural group until the early nineteenth century, by which time they had blended into the larger categories of Native Christians or Indonesian Pribumi. One enclave of Mardijkers, however, remained largely unassimilated: these were the inhabitants of Tugu, a village 24 km to the east of Batavia, founded on land granted in 1661 to 23 Mardijker families originally from Bengal and Coromandel.¹⁹ Though virtually extinct (from the early nineteenth century) elsewhere in western Indonesia, Portuguese Creole survived in Tugu: a few song-texts in this language, transcribed in Tugu in 1884 and 1885, were published by the linguist Hugo Schuchardt, and in 1937 a Tugu resident worked with another linguist to draw up a list of Portuguese words still in use there.²⁰

What was the music of the Mardijkers? The most we can be (relatively) sure of is that the Portuguese ships brought the *cavaquinho* (which became the *kroncong* lute) and possibly the frame drum (called *adufe* in Portugal, *rebana* in Indonesia), as well as a handful of melodies, and the rudiments of chordal harmony as accompaniment to sung melody. Presumably these elements—perhaps mixed with others from Malacca, India, and Africa²¹—became the basis for Mardijker music.

¹⁸ Both phrases quoted in this sentence come from Taylor 1983:47.

¹⁹ De Haan (1935, 1:627). Ganap (2006:4,55,113-124) disputes this: he believes, on no evidence that I can see, that the land-grant was made to families originally from Goa, not Bengal and Coromandel. Goanese, he argues, were more steeped than others in Portuguese culture and therefore more likely to have preserved it in Tugu. The figure of 24 km comes from the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Toegoe 1921:385.)

²⁰ For the song-texts, see Schuchardt (1891); for the word-list, see Pinto da França (1970:83-101).

²¹ This possibility is sometimes proposed, or even assumed. I myself cannot detect such influences in the music of *kroncong*, even in the earliest recordings. The lyrics are sung in Malay, but that is likely a later development, not

Schuchardt's Portuguese Creole songs from 1884 and 1885 were sung to the accompaniment of the *kroncong* lute. This, together with the fact that at least as late as 1935 such lutes were still made in Tugu (and, according to Manusama, nowhere else) suggests that the singing of Portuguese Creole songs accompanied by the *kroncong* lute was a long-standing tradition in Tugu, perhaps going all the way back the founding of the village in 1661.²² We could therefore plausibly see Tugu as an isolated community where early, Portuguese-inflected forms of Mardijker music survived when they had died out or been transformed under Dutch influence elsewhere.²³

More than that, however, is claimed for Tugu: it is called the birthplace of *kroncong*.²⁴ While the residents of Tugu are happy with this distinction, I believe it is unfounded. Elements of Portuguese musical culture survived in Tugu, and elements attributable to Portuguese music survive in *kroncong*; but it does not follow that *kroncong* therefore comes from Tugu. The effort to tie *kroncong* to Tugu has led to an exaggeration of *kroncong*'s Portuguese character. Ganap, for example, proposes *fado* as the "prototype" of *kroncong*—never mind that *fado* emerged in Lisbon in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, more than 200 years after the end of direct Portuguese presence in Indonesia (Castelo-Branco 2001).²⁵ Seebass and Ganap both suggest that the interlocking plucked-lute figuration called *cak-cuk*, which seems

one initiated by crewmen in the seventeenth century. The sailors probably sang in Portuguese or a Portuguese-based pidgin.

²² The 1935 date comes from Ganap (2006:217), citing de Water (1935:100-101), a source I have been unable to locate. "Nowhere else" comes from Manusama (1919:7).

²³ Ganap (2006:115) disagrees: he believes that what was preserved in Tugu was *Portuguese* music, not Mardijker music. The Mardijkers, he says, were not playing Portuguese music. What, then, were they playing?

²⁴ For example, by Kornhauser (1978:176): "By all accounts, Tugu is the place where *kroncong* originated in Java. To the best of our knowledge, it has been played in this kampung for the past 315 years" (i.e., presumably, from 1661 to 1976, when Kornhauser's M.A. thesis, on which her 1978 article is based, was written).

²⁵ Ganap 2006:167 and 317-42.

(on the basis of recordings) to appear in popular *kroncong* only at the end of the 1920s, derives from the use of paired *cavaquinhos* in Portuguese music.²⁶ But this paired playing seems to be a recent development in Portugal, favored by folkloric groups; it is not confirmed in descriptions of Portuguese folk music or early *fado*. (And if it came to Indonesia in the sixteenth century, where was it hiding all that time before it showed up in the recordings?) The use of quatrains and the practice of song duels in *kroncong* is also ascribed to Portugal—never mind that the Malay/Indonesian *pantun* predominant in *kroncong* is uniquely Malay, or that song duels and other “repartee genres” are found all over Southeast Asia.²⁷ And no one seems to notice that two key instruments in the *kroncong* ensemble, the violin and the transverse flute, have little place in Portuguese music, zero place in *fado*, and are not cited in discussions of the instruments the sailors brought. (They could easily have come from later contacts with the Dutch or the English.)

I propose instead that *kroncong* and the music of Tugu represent divergent branches growing out of early Mardijker music but subject to later musical influences as well. We know virtually nothing of either branch before the 1880s. What we do know is that, aside from Schuchardt’s, the earliest print references to *kroncong* music or to playing the *kroncong* lute place *kroncong* in association with Eurasians, not the inhabitants of Tugu. It was Eurasians (whose primary European orientation, by the 1880s, was of course to Holland, not Portugal) who took *kroncong* up and integrated it into their new theater form, *stambul*, where it came to the attention of the first companies recording Indonesian music.

²⁶ Seebass 1997:239,240 n.6, and Ganap 2006:327-28.

²⁷ The apt term “repartee genres” is from Terry Miller (1998:325). On these genres, see also Revel 1992.

Folk kroncong (?1880s–1900)

The earliest foreshadowing of popular *kroncong* that I have seen comes from a newspaper report in 1884. As paraphrased by Susan Abeyasekere, it states that in that year on Cap Go Me, the high point of Chinese New Year celebrations, one of the entertainments was “*kroncong* played by Eurasians.”²⁸ The music starts to come into sharper focus in the 1890s, when it is adopted by the *stambul* theater. This Indonesian-language popular theater, inspired by Indian and Malayan models, had its first performances in Surabaya, in January 1891. It was backed by Chinese-Indonesian entrepreneurs, and for years it featured primarily “Indo” (Eurasian) performers. According to Matthew Cohen’s detailed study of the first *stambul* company, Auguste Mahieu’s Komedi Stamboel, the music consisted of tunes composed by Mahieu himself (2006:59); no doubt current popular tunes were also used. The instrumental accompaniment was apparently highly variable but consisted almost entirely of European instruments.²⁹ The *stambul* theater’s initial encounter with *kroncong* took place when Mahieu’s troupe first played Batavia in September 1892.

So what was *kroncong* at that time? There are no informative accounts from the 1890s, but judging from later reports and scraps of contemporary evidence, it was an urban folk music, using a very small number of well-known melodies. Manusama (1919:7) identifies and provides notations for two such melodies, implying that these were the basis of all the *kroncong*

²⁸ Abeyasekere 1989:79, citing an article in the Batavia newspaper *Bintang-Barat* dated 9 February 1884. I have been unable to locate a copy of the original newspaper text and cannot determine whether *kroncong* here means a whole *kroncong* ensemble or just a singer with a lute. Incidentally, Cap Go Me fell on 11 February in that year, so the article must have been forecasting the entertainment rather than reporting it.

²⁹ Various reported instrumentations are described in chapter 6. The point is, pretty much any European instruments could be incorporated.

melodies of his time. Both tunes, he says, were Portuguese in origin: called *Moresco* and *Proungo* in Portugal, in Indonesia they had become known, respectively, as *Kroncong* (or *Lagu Kroncong*, “*kroncong* melody”; or, though Manusama does not say this, as *Kroncong Morisko*) and *Kroncong Bandan* (or *Prounga*). Over the centuries, the Portuguese melodies had been greatly adulterated (*zeer verbasterd*) in Indonesia, though he acknowledges that the “variations” (*variaties*) had much increased the songs’ “pathos and loveliness” (*aandoenlijkheid en lieflijkheid*).

Manusama does not say where he heard or found his notated versions, and they have only inconclusive similarities to the various melodies recorded under the name *Morisko* (*Moeridskoe*, *Moritsko*, etc.) or *Kroncong Bandan*. The latter, a minor-key melody, became rare in the sung repertoire after World War I and will not be discussed in this chapter; but all major-key *kroncong asli*, including *Morisko*, share a single harmonic-melodic structure, thus confirming Manusama’s basic perception that the major-key *kroncong* are all related to a single melody. But it is hard to see his notated *Moresco* as a version of that melody;³⁰ and even if we accept that his *Moresco* is somehow “the same” as the melodies recorded under the title *Morisko*, it does not follow that *Moresco/Morisko* is the *source* of all other major-key *kroncong asli*. There seems to be little beyond the Portugueseness of the title to support a claim of priority for *Morisko*, and the title could have become attached to the melody at any time.

³⁰ Manusama’s notation, which gives no chord symbols, implies most of the harmonies of *kroncong asli* (I, IV, and V, for sure, and possibly II), but not always in the right places—and it is the placement that is crucial. Since those chords (except for the major II chord) are found in most popular songs that use Western harmony, it is not their presence but their sequence and duration in *kroncong asli* that distinguishes that form from others.

The texts sung to the melodies of folk *kroncong* were quatrains in Malay/Indonesian. These quatrains were of two formal types, *syair* and *pantun*.³¹ *Pantun* in particular can reach a high literary standard, but the verses sung to *kroncong* melodies were folk poetry, not always polished and not always subtle. I call them folk poetry, and *kroncong* urban folk music, because neither the verses nor the melodies were the property of specialists. Anyone could learn the one or two common melodies, and anyone could memorize a few verses to have ready if the moment came to sing. Or, even better, one could make up new verses on the spot.

In her invaluable catalogue of Sino-Malay literature in Indonesia, Claudine Salmon observes that one of the very first printed books written by Chinese-Indonesians in the Malay language was a narrative *syair* published in 1871, and that between 1886 and 1910 more than 40 books of *syair* appeared. She groups these in four broad categories, three of them narrative

³¹ All four lines of a *syair* quatrain have the same end-rhyme (AAAA); individual quatrains could stand alone, but the form was well-suited to narrative poems that could run on for hundreds of stanzas. *Pantun* quatrains have the rhyme scheme ABAB and divide into two contrasting halves, the first commonly called the *sampiran* (lit. “hanger,” or, in effect, “hook”) and the second the *isi* (“content”), where the *sampiran* tends to be an objective statement of fact or description of the physical world, and the *isi* expresses an emotion or describes a personal condition. But what is the relation between the two halves of the quatrain? As Braginsky writes (2004:495), “For the past hundred years the nature of the connection . . . has remained the main problem that researchers into this genre have tried to solve.” Some scholars believe the two are closely connected in meaning, with the *sampiran* presenting an image that is poetically resonant with the emotion or condition articulated in the *isi*. Others believe that the *sampiran* is often *not* connected in meaning to the *isi*; instead it sets up the *rhymes* of the *isi*, but rather than poetic resonance it offers the aesthetic pleasure of a puzzle: what statement about emotions or the human condition will rhyme with this? While I do not question that in many literary *pantun* the *sampiran* and *isi* are indeed linked in meaning, when it comes to the verses in the popular *pantun* books and *kroncong* songs, I stand with the second group of scholars: I believe that these are for the most part folk and popular verses meant to delight precisely by the outlandishness, the incongruity of the apposition of the first and second couplets. The resolute literary mind may be able to wring some meaning from the two together, but I believe this is often over-interpretation. I give just one example here, a woman’s verse (*Krontjong bintang mas* ca.1920:18, verse 4):

<i>Daon delima memboengkoes sagoe,</i>	Sago wrapped in a pomegranate leaf,
<i>Anak sebrang djoel sakoteng,</i>	Someone from elsewhere sells a ginger drink,
<i>Soeda lama saja menoenggoe,</i>	For a long time I have been waiting,
<i>Baroe sekarang babakoe dateng.</i>	And only now my man comes.

The two halves are rich in phonic correspondences—end-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonance—but I fail to see any credible connection in meaning. Parallel examples are given in another context in footnote 59 below. For more on the versification of *pantun*, see Thomas 1979. Two well-known collections of literary *pantun* are Balai Pustaka 1920 and Zainal Abidin Bakar 1983.

or didactic; the fourth is “works intended as pure entertainment, which are generally called *pantun*” (1981:19, 26). It is these collections of entertainment *pantun* that figure in the history of *kroncong*. An early one, published in 1893, is the *Boekoe pantoen ja’itoe jang terpaké aken njanji’an Peroenga dengan Moeritskoe dari se’orang Anak Bestari*, “Book of *pantun* used for the songs *Peroenga* and *Moeritskoe*, from an Expert” (Krafft 1893). The verses were compiled, if not composed, by H. Krafft, who was presumably an Indo (and hence is not in Salmon’s bibliography).³² The book’s importance for us is not in its poetry, but in its title: these verses are to be sung to *Prounga* and *Moritsko*, the tunes that Manusama identified as the original *kroncong* melodies. But why publish such a book? Because Mahieu’s *Komedie Stamboel* had just visited Batavia, and its singers had taken up *kroncong*. The book capitalizes on the sudden attention given to *kroncong*; it assumes that readers know the melodies and are eager for new verses to sing to them.

In the *syair* section of Salmon’s bibliography (1981:455-66) we can find at least ten other collections of “pure entertainment” *pantun* and *syair* published in 1886-1910 (the first period in her historical scheme).³³ Since any four-line *pantun* or *syair* stanza could be sung,³⁴ people stockpiling verses to sing to *kroncong* melodies could draw on these collections even though *kroncong* was not explicitly mentioned in their titles.

³² Krafft does appear in Matthew Cohen’s study (2006:161), as “likely a Batavia Indo *kroncong* singer” and a “Batavia stambul devotee,” who published “two short stambul scenarios” in 1893 (also the year of his *pantun* collection).

³³ “At least,” because some collections cannot be dated and therefore may or may not fall into the first period in Salmon’s scheme.

³⁴ The association of quatrains and singing was so close it did not need to be made explicit. The title of Tio Bo Ing’s *Boekoe pantoen geremet atie, inie pantoenan baroe aken goenanja menglipooran atie jang sedee* (“Book of *pantun* to touch [lit.: creep into] the heart: new *pantun* to relieve a sad heart”), a collection of 260 *pantun* and *syair* published in 1891, refers only to *pantun*, not to singing, but within the text the author calls his verses songs (*njanjian*, stanza 4) and says his purpose is “to sing for laughter” (*inie menjanjie boeat ketawa*, stanza 258).

The *pantun* books allow us to infer the existence of informal *kroncong* singing in Batavia before 1900, perhaps primarily among young people. Consider, for example, the collection published by Boenga Mawar (pseud.) in 1894, *Boekoe pantoen penghoboer hati aken goena menghilangken karat di hati, serta menjindir satoe sama laen*, whose title may be translated as “Book of entertaining *pantun* for cleaning rust from the heart, also for one person teasing another.” The word *menjindir* here indicates that the activity known as *sindir-menyindir*, flirting or teasing through *pantun*—with one party, be it a lone individual or a soloist representing a group, launching a *pantun* that is answered by a second party—was practiced in Batavia in the 1890s.³⁵ Boenga Mawar remarks, in the opening verses of the collection, “*pantun* are the way to *menyindir*; men and women have to think [about what they mean],” and “all *pantun menyindir*.”³⁶ In a *pantun* where the first and second halves are clearly connected in meaning, he (or is it she?) writes: “Many people on a bridge, throwing stones one by one; many people in an open field, throwing *pantun* one by one.”³⁷

Two other contexts for *kroncong* singing that are reported from the first decades of the twentieth century may also be plausibly inferred for the 1890s. These are *kroncong* performed as entertainment at weddings and other celebrations (we have already seen this at the Cap Go Me festivities in 1884), and what may be called “street *kroncong*,” sung by groups of musicians wandering the neighborhoods in the evenings.

³⁵ This mode of banter, normally between the sexes but conceivably between residents of different villages or between families in a wedding negotiation—or, in the 1910s and ’20s, between rival *kroncong* ensembles—still existed in some rural areas of Indonesia in the 1990s. I am not aware of contexts in either the 19th or 20th centuries where *pantun* were bantered *without* being sung.

³⁶ *Pantoenan memang djalan menjindir, / Toewan dan nona boleh berpikir* (“Boenga Mawar” 1894:3, verse 2). *Jang mana pantoen tida menjindir, / Semoewa pantoen menjindir djoega* (ibid.:3, verse 3).

³⁷ *Rame-rame atas djembatan, / Boewang batoe sa-orang satoe, / Rame-rame doedoek di medan, / Boewang pantoen sa-orang satoe* (ibid.:3, verse 1).

Soon after the Komedi Stamboel came to Batavia in 1892, *kroncong* singers took up the *stambul* songs.³⁸ And vice versa: Cohen reports (2006:168) that Mahieu hired three female *kroncong* singers in 1893. Thus began a close association of *kroncong* with the *stambul* theater that persisted for some thirty years, with *kroncong* a standard element in *stambul* love scenes.³⁹

5.2. Popular *kroncong*, nascent phase, 1900-ca. 1924⁴⁰

For the rest of this chapter, I shall be discussing the evidence about popular *kroncong* that is offered by commercial recordings made before 1942 (and by auxiliary sources like newspaper reports). I shall touch on several topics: instrumentation, idiom, performance context, song form, tempo, repertoire classifications, and the nature of the sung lyrics. The recording of *kroncong* began early in the new century: the very first commercial recordings of Indonesian music, those made in Singapore in May, 1903, included two *kroncong* songs (entitled *Krontjong*

³⁸ Cohen (2006:169) quotes an article in *Bintang-Barat* (14 February 1893) saying that people were getting tired of the *stambul* songs, but now “the *kroncong* players have reanimated [them].”

³⁹ Tzu You, “Tooneel-Melajoe, 1: riwayat ringkes,” *Sin Po Wekelijksche-Editie* 17, no. 870 (2 December 1939): 10.

⁴⁰ The periodicity and categorization I use in this chapter cannot be firm: they are torpedoed by the long hiatus in recording, which prevents us from observing *kroncong*’s transition from folk to popular. One could say that *kroncong* became a popular music as soon as it was recorded (1906), but I believe that in all respects *except* recording it remained an urban folk music until sometime during World War I. In publications I have waffled on the end-point of this first phase—should it end before or after the blank period? I have decided here to attach the blank period to the first phase, but the reader will please understand that that blank period is transitional. A central feature of the transition is a slowing-down of the tempo, which I discuss at length below. The *terminus post quem* for the slow-down is 1912 or 1914, when the last pre-war recordings were made (these being at the faster tempo), and the *terminus ante quem* is 1925, the date of the first post-war, slow-tempo recordings. But we can be more precise. In the foreword (dated August 1918) to his book on *kroncong* (1919:1), Manusama writes, “this music that was so popular in olden days . . . is again being heard [*weder van zich laat hooren*], and it even happens that *kroncong* competitions are being held as public entertainments in the various parks in this city [=Batavia].” This indicates that interest in *kroncong* had previously waned but was renewed at some point before the time of writing. The slowing-down of the tempo was probably an element in this revival.

and *Krontjong Bandan*). Beka recorded two (with those same titles) in Batavia in January 1906. Odeon recorded many, often entitled *Lagoe Krontjong*, beginning in 1907. The reader should bear in mind that there is at least a twelve-year gap in recorded documentation of *kroncong*: commercial recording in Indonesia ceased in 1914 (or possibly as early as 1912), and did not resume until 1925.

Instrumentation and idiom. In these early years, neither the instrumentation nor the idiom of standard *kroncong* had as yet been established. The instruments in the earliest recording I have been able to hear (Beka Grand 1799, recorded in January 1906; audio example 1; see Figure 2.5) are violin, flute, and the *kroncong* lute (or possibly a ukulele). The plucked lute strums, but there is no *cak-cuk* figuration, no walking guitar, and no cello. In Odeon recordings made in the following year (Odeon 91024 [audio example 2], 91025, 91026), we hear violin, flute, and guitar: the guitar plays an ostinato figure rather than walking, and again there is no cello or *cak-cuk* (not even a *kroncong* lute to provide the *cuk*). A recording ca. 1908 (Odeon 91370) has several violins, flute, guitar, and a trombone. In two recordings ca. 1909 (Odeon 26017 and 26031 [audio example 3]), the instruments are violin, flute, and piano—no plucked lutes at all. There is a simple explanation for all this variety: what we hear in these recordings is *kroncong* as it figured in the *stambul* theater and as it was accompanied by *stambul* orchestras.⁴¹

In March 1917, an announcement was published in a Batavia newspaper inviting *kroncong* groups to enter a *concours kroncong*—a public *kroncong* contest—to be held in an

⁴¹ Indeed, all of the recordings just mentioned, except the one with trombone, are shown on their labels as performed by “Stamboel [or Stamboul] Batavia.” This may be the name of a troupe, or perhaps it is simply a designation of the *kind* of troupe. The record with trombone is probably also by *stambul* musicians, but it is not identified as such on the label.

amusement park on 7 April 1917.⁴² The announcement specifies the requisite instrumentation for participating groups: two violins, a flute, a *kroncong* lute, a mandolin, and a guitar. This is said to be the minimal complement, implying that other instruments could also be included. Singers could be either male or female. (The number of singers who could appear with a group is not specified.) The instrumentation mandated here is close to that of standard *kroncong*, but it is doubtful that the idiom was: there is no cello drum, and the roles of the guitar and mandolin are unclear. The presence of both *kroncong* lute and mandolin suggests *cak-cuk* interplay, but the fast tempo of early *kroncong* precluded it. That the nine volumes of Tio Tek Hong's "*kroncong* and *stamboel* songbooks" (published between 1924 and 1927[?])⁴³ are described on the cover as being "for viool or mandoline"—the same notation serving for both instruments—indicates instead that the mandolin was a lead melodic instrument in that period.⁴⁴

Performance contexts. As we have seen, the performance context of the *stambul* theater dominates the representation of *kroncong* in the early 78s. Other principal contexts for *kroncong* performance seem to be largely absent from the recordings, but I must touch on them briefly. Aside from the *stambul* theater, the main contexts for *kroncong* in this early

⁴² Advertisement for Uni Park, Meester Cornelis, in *Sin Po* [Batavia], 26 March 1917.

⁴³ *Tio Tek Hong's krontjong & komedie stamboel liederen-album voor viool of mandoline, deel I-IX*. These important sources are undated, but newspaper advertisements allow us to establish termini post quem and ante quem. An advertisement in *Neratja* [Batavia], 20 March 1924, states that volume 1 has just been published. One in *Pertja Selatan* [Palembang], 3 February 1927, says volumes 6A, 7, 8, 9, and 10 will be out in late February 1927, but I have found no clear indication that they *did* come out at that time. An advertisement in *Sin Po Maleische-Editie* [Batavia], 18 December 1931, indicates that all volumes through number 9 had been published by that date. I do not know whether volume 10 ever appeared.

⁴⁴ In a *syair* recounting a *concoors kroncong*, published ca. 1920, the mandolin is said to be one of the most important instruments in the ensemble: without it the piece falls apart (*lagoenja terbanting*) (*Sair Kerontjong* ca.1920:60; see footnote 48 for more on this text). This does not seem to describe an instrument playing only the offbeat half of a *cak-cuk* figuration.

period were *concours kroncong*, domestic and neighborhood celebrations, and the performances of itinerant “street *kroncong*” groups.

The *concours* were of two types. One was a contest of group against group, each aiming to play more impressively than the others. The announcement of the April 1917 *concours* states that groups would be evaluated on their ability to play sweetly (*merdoe*) and in tune (*akoer*). (Extra prizes were to be given for the most amusing and the handsomest costumes.) A key point of evaluation in such contests was evidently the cleverness of the sung verses. Groups tried to have at least two singers, usually one male and one female, to engage in friendly teasing exchanges (*sindir-menyindir*) of *pantun* or *syair*. In what appears to be the first-ever *concours kroncong*, held on 25 July 1915 at Pasar Gambir,⁴⁵ one group (made up of the same *stambul* performers who recorded most of Odeon’s *kroncong* sides before World War I) lost to another because the winning group had two singers to exchange *pantun*, while the *stambul* group had only its female singer that night.⁴⁶

The other type of *concours* was a song duel sometimes called *adu pantun*, a “*pantun* battle,” in which the contest was not between individuals in the same group but between lead singers from competing groups. The *adu pantun* could be amicable—the male singer of one group engaging the female singer of the other in a mock flirtation—or it could be hostile, with each singer seeking to best the other with mocking or insulting verses. A description of a

⁴⁵ “Pasar Gambir,” *Sin Po* [Batavia], 26 July 1915. Pasar Gambir was normally held at the end of August, not July, in order to coincide with birthday celebrations for Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, born on 31 August 1880. Yet this article and another (*Sin Po*, 3 August 1915) both refer explicitly to Pasar Gambir, not just some nonce event at Gambir Park. Was Pasar Gambir, for some reason, held a month early in 1915?

⁴⁶ The author of the 26 July newspaper report (footnote 45), who is clearly biased in favor of the *stambul* group, attributes its defeat simply to the other group’s having better costumes: they were all dressed as *sinyo* (Indos) from Depok, whereas the *stambul* singer, Nyi Sri Panggoeng (“Madame Queen of the Stage”) wore a *bidadari* (heavenly nymph) costume that did not fit with the everyday clothes of the instrumentalists. But a careful reading of the report shows that the absence of the group’s male singer, Willem Cramer, was the decisive factor.

flirtatious contest is given in *Krontjong bintang mas* (ca. 1920),⁴⁷ while the *Sair kerontjong saling-saoetan* (also ca. 1920)⁴⁸ offers a vivid account of a hostile one, including a series of acrid exchanges between the female singers: one calls the other a prostitute (*perempoean pelatjoeran*), and the other responds by calling the first a *liplap* (an insulting term for an Indo). All the while (and it must have been a long while), musicians keep the *kroncong* accompaniment flowing.

The groups that took part in *concours kroncong* were, the *Sair kerontjong* tells us, amateur ensembles that performed without needing or expecting payment. These groups also accepted invitations to entertain at weddings and other festivities. The author of the *Sair kerontjong* draws an invidious distinction between these respectable groups (*jang orang sohorken*) and “street” or “walking” groups (*kerontjong djalan*) that played music in hopes of earning money. (Today such buskers would be called *pengamen*.) “Groups that take payment,” the author says, “are trash.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Krontjong bintang mas: sindir-menjindir saling saoletan antara baba dan nona* (“Golden star *kroncong*: back-and-forth teasing between a Baba and a Nona”) (ca.1920), pp. 9-40. A description of a similar contest, but involving two singers from the same group, is found in Faber 1951:27. Mock flirtations and courtships in verse occur all over Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand (Miller 1998:325-26).

⁴⁸ The full title of this informative text is *Sair kerontjong saling-saoetan, dikarang menoeroet sairannja kampioen-kampioen jang terkenal dan sindirannja djago-djago menjanji jang termasoehoer dan beroleh prijs dalem Concours Kerontjong di Betawi dan Weltevreden* (“Back-and-forth *kroncong syair*, based on the *syair* of well-known champions and the teasing verses of top singers who have won prizes in *concours kroncong* in Batavia and Weltevreden”). While it does appear, in keeping with its title, to contain examples of sung verses, much of the book is a description (in *syair*) of various types of *kroncong* performers and performances.

⁴⁹ *Sedeng koempoelan jang menerima oepa, / Itoe termasoek dalem golongan sampa* (*Sair kerontjong* ca.1920:33). This was a moderate position: some writers (e.g. “Factotum” in footnote 52) refused to grant respectability to *any* kind of *kroncong*.

Kroncong jalan groups wandered the *kampung* (residential neighborhoods) at night, singing verses to the accompaniment of a *kroncong* lute⁵⁰ and whatever other instruments they had available—violin, flute, guitar, and tambourine are usually mentioned. The *Sair kerontjong* is the only source I have seen that says (plausibly enough) that they played for money. The more common reason offered is to serenade young women. These groups are represented in two ways in the literature. In one view, prevalent among Dutch and Indo writers, they are harmless—lovestruck boys serenading their girls in the moonlight.⁵¹ Indonesian and Chinese-Indonesian writers tend to take a darker view: the musicians are louche if not criminal, *buaya* (“crocodiles”) leading young women to ruin.⁵² An account in a Batavia newspaper in 1908 falls in between: the *sinyo* (Indo) clerk and his two *sinyo* friends who serenade one Naima in Gang

⁵⁰ Only one. The interlocking plucked lutes (*cak-cuk*) of the standard *kroncong* ensemble are not mentioned in early accounts of street *kroncong*. One sees them, however, in the 1934 staging of a *kroncong* serenade (footnote 51).

⁵¹ See, for example, Spiegelaer 1917; his description is based on one by the Indo writer Hans van de Wall (writing under the pseudonym Victor Ido). See also the picture of a *kroncong* serenade staged in Holland for a celebration of the Netherlands chapter of the Indo Europeesch Verbond in 1934—violin, two guitars, at least three small plucked lutes for *cak-cuk*, and a young woman peeking over the wall (*Onze Stem* 15[35]:1070, 31 August 1934).

⁵² For example, in Tirta Adhi Soerjo’s *Tjerita Njai Ratna* (1985[1909]:344), the fallen woman, Ratna, remembers the days when she was “poor and living in Gang Bella. On certain nights, Protestant crocodiles [*buaya-buaya Serani*] would pass by my house playing *kroncong* [*main keronongan*]. That was when I was still pure, so I ignored those woman-tempting devils [*syetan-syetan penggodanya perempuan*].” Another example of this attitude is seen in an opinion piece by “Factotum,” published in *Sin Po* after the *concours kroncong* of 25 July 1915. The author criticizes Pasar Gambir for mounting the *concours*: “Everyone knows that *kroncong* is not a music that decent people like to hear or are used to hearing. . . . People say *kroncong* songs can be used to move the hearts of featherbrained young women. For that reason, those songs are considered improper. . . . Truly, we cannot accept this *concours*” (*Rata-rata orang taoe, laogoe krontjong boekan satoe laogoe jang soeka atawa biasa didenger oleh orang baek baek. . . . [O]rang bilang, bisa digoenaken djoega boeat bikin bergerak hatinja nona nona jang enteng pikiran.*

[Paragraph] *Mendjadi itoe laogoe djoega biasa diseboet tida sopan. . . . [Paragraph] Betoel-betoel, kita tida bisa moefakat aken itoe concours*) (Factotum 1915; my ellipsis). Yet another example is Nemo’s 1924 pulp novel, *Dari gadis djadi boenga raja* (“From virgin to prostitute”), in which an unscrupulous Chinese-Indonesian youth seduces a teenager with *kroncong*. Sometimes he comes to her house alone and sings to her, accompanying himself on his *kroncong* lute, sometimes he brings a group of two or three friends to serenade her. Eventually she runs away with him; two weeks later she is a sex slave in a bordello. There is, I believe, something unconvincing about the tales of *kroncong* crocodiles. Wandering around with a crew of musicians in tow seems a labor-intensive way of getting a young woman to run off, and one likely to leave all but one member of the group unsatisfied. I suspect that the stories stem from an erotic fantasy of transgression and danger. That these groups were *pengamen* seems more plausible.

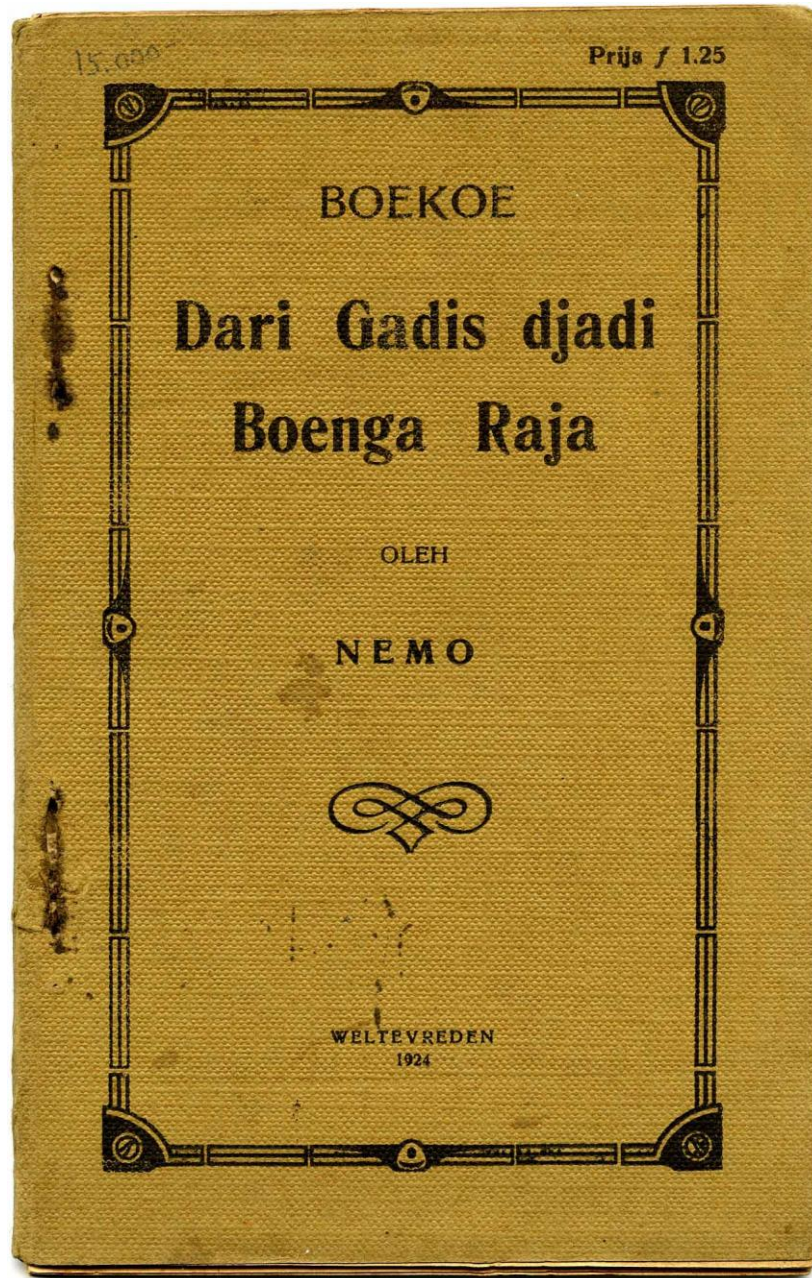


Figure 5.2. The cover of *Dari gadis djadi boenga raja* (From virgin to prostitute), by “Nemo,” published in 1924. (See footnote 52.)

Sampi, Kemayoran, in the middle of the night seem merely rowdy. Naima, it turns out, is not pleased; she didn't invite them, and besides, their noise bothered the neighbors, so she lodges a complaint.⁵³

Neither *adu pantun* nor the songs of street *kroncong* groups are found in the “identified *kroncong*” records (Table 5.1). With *adu pantun*, time constraints may have been a reason; also, in the case of the hostile contests, the exchanges may have been too raw and unseemly to be fixed on record. Street *kroncong* was, it appears from the verses published in *Sair kerontjong*, not so much raw as raucous.

Form, repertoire, and tempo. Transcriptions 1-3 (in the Appendix to this chapter) present rough notations of the vocal melodies (with mere outlines of the instrumental introductions and interludes) from pre-1915 *kroncong* recordings.⁵⁴ (Excerpts from the recordings are heard in the accompanying audio examples.) The transcriptions aim mainly to sketch the melody in relation to the underlying song form, which is the same for all. The song form is conveniently written as a 16-bar chord sequence, which, after an instrumental introduction, is repeated several times. I have had to make a somewhat arbitrary choice as to where to place the beginning point of the repeating cycle. Intuitively, the best point would seem to be at the start of the vocal, but it turns out that that is not always in the same bar in every recording, so gearing the cycle to the vocal would produce different cycles for different recordings. Instead I frame the cycle as beginning at the tonic chord that resolves the dominant

⁵³ *Taman Sari*, 8 May 1908. *Sinyo*, by the way, is a nice example of a Portuguese survival in Batavia: the word comes from *senhor*. By 1908, however, it designated an Indo, not a *Mardijker*, much less a person from Portugal.

⁵⁴ All of the transcriptions in this chapter have been transposed to the key of F, mainly to minimize leger lines.

heard near the end of the instrumental introduction. Figure 5.3 shows the sequence as I construe it.

(intro . . .V) :	I	I	I*	I
	V	II	V	V
	IV	IV	I	V
	I	I	I	V :

Figure 5.3. *Early kroncong structure (16 bars/16 chords).†*
*The vocal usually begins in the bar marked with *.*

†The figure shows a sequence of evenly spaced chords or harmonies. Each roman numeral represents a harmony based on the corresponding degree of the diatonic major scale. The II chord is major and may be interpreted as a secondary dominant (V of V). The figure shows a single strophe of a *kroncong* melody; in performance, after the last V chord in the sequence, the music would return to the first I chord and repeat the sequence one or more times. The last time through, there would be one or two final tonic (I) chords after the last V.

Virtually all songs designated as *kroncong* on pre-1915 record labels have this structure.⁵⁵ It serves as the basis for a relatively small number of melodic realizations—I have not yet taken an inventory, but I estimate no more than ten. Most of these melodies lack individual titles: they are named on the labels simply *Krontjong* or *Lagoe Krontjong* (“*Kroncong* Melody”); one group of recordings is titled by key: *Krontjong Naturel* (=C), *Krontjong II Kruis* (“two sharps”=D),

⁵⁵ I know of only one exception before 1915: Odeon 91370, labeled *Krontjong* but with a different structure that I do not recognize. I consider the exception trivial: a mislabeling, perhaps, or an effort by the record company to capitalize on the popularity of *kroncong* by generalizing the term to include more songs. Some further exceptions occur in the 1925-42 period; these also I consider trivial. If justification is needed, consider these precedents: despite their titles, it is generally recognized that *Limehouse Blues* is not a blues and *Jingle Bell Rock* is not rock, so we are not obliged to reformulate our analyses of blues and rock to include them.

Krontjong I Mol (“one flat”=F), etc.⁵⁶ There are also certain titles that are *not* labeled *kroncong* but nevertheless have the *kroncong* structure: songs called *Morisko* (in any of the variant spellings) and *Nacht Souvenir* (e.g. *Nacht Souvenir Weltevreden*, *Nacht Souvenir de Batavia*). (Transcription 3 demonstrates this structural identity for a *Morisko*.) What distinguishes these songs from those called *kroncong* is not their structure but the fact that they are played at a somewhat slower tempo. At that time, *Morisko* was explicitly considered to be in a separate category from *kroncong*: Tio Tek Hong’s first songbook, published in 1924, advertises on the cover that inside one will find “the newest Krontjongs, Moeridskoes and Stamboel II[s], those that are heard in concours in the Parks [i.e., amusement parks] of Batavia.”

Probably the most striking new evidence provided by the 78s concerns the tempo of *kroncong*—or, more precisely, the *change* of tempo, a slowing-down to half-speed, that occurs between the first phase of recording (1903-14) and the second (1925-35). I shall discuss the tempo of the first phase here, in preparation for presenting the slow-down in Part III.

The accompaniment in the pre-1915 recordings sounds a clear four-beat subdivision of each measure. I have assigned quarter-note values to this four-beat subdivision and timed the beats with an electronic metronome to arrive at metronome markings stating how many successive quarter-notes will be sounded in one minute, if the tempo remains steady. (In fact, most of the songs speed up during the recording.) For songs identified as *kroncong*, the range of starting tempos I have measured (not only in the pieces transcribed here) is from 106 to 133

⁵⁶ There are a few pre-1915 *kroncong* recordings with more distinctive titles, usually including place names or performance contexts: along with *Krontjong Bandan*, there are such titles as *Krontjong Semarang*, *Krontjong Soerabaja*, *Krontjong Pasar Baroe*, *Krontjong Pesta* (=celebration, festival), and *Krontjong Park* (=amusement park). In the case of *Krontjong Semarang* and *Krontjong Soerabaja*, the performers came from those cities, and that may be what justified the unusually specific titles. In any case, this type of variation in titles is different in kind from the riot of titles after 1925: *Krontjong Matjan*, *Krontjong Merapi Hati*, *Krontjong Columbia*, *Krontjong Smiles*, *Krontjong Mawar*, *Krontjong Indian Moonlight*, and hundreds more.

quarter-notes per minute (qpm); those that speed up have usually added 5 or 6 qpm by the end of the record.⁵⁷ The average starting tempo is 117. For *Morisko* and *Nacht Souvenir* the tempo is slower: starting in the range of 90-92 qpm and ending at 94-97. From the quarter-note figure one can calculate the harmonic tempo, the rate at which chords or harmonies change: divide the qpm figure by four.⁵⁸ One could also derive the duration in seconds of one cycle of the melody. So far, all of this is straightforward. It only becomes complicated later, when we try to compare this analysis with *kroncong* after 1924.

Lyrics. Although it is very difficult to catch the lyrics sung in scratchy old 78s (this accounts for the many textual lacunae in my transcriptions), one can still determine the formal character of the lyrics by counting syllables, listening to the final vowels of phrases, and discounting the filler words and vocables (*indung-indung, sayang-sayang, nona manis, lah, ai,* etc.; I show these in italics in the transcriptions) that are inserted, usually at the same points in every verse, to make the lines of a *pantun* or *syair* quatrain fit the *kroncong* melody. (*Pantun* quatrains were far more common than *syair* in *kroncong* singing, and I shall from here on call all the quatrains *pantun* for convenience.) Two lines of a *pantun* were sung to one statement of the melody; thus a complete *pantun* took two melodic cycles. The first two lines were sung over the first twelve bars of one cycle of the melody, arriving at the tonic in measure 13. The last four measures (including measure 13) could be filled by instrumental figures, or by another,

⁵⁷ The recording from which audio example 2 is taken (Odeon 91024) accelerates more markedly: from 106 to 124 qpm.

⁵⁸ I take the *fastest* instances of harmonic change as determining the harmonic tempo, not slower instances such as the first line in Figure 5.2, which is all one chord. In pre-1915 *kroncong*, the fastest changes occur in the sequence V-II-V in the second line, and I-V-I in the third and fourth lines. It is by applying the rate of the fastest passages across the whole melodic cycle that I arrive at a 16-bar analysis of the form, where each bar begins with a chord (whether new or repeated). As for the term “harmonic tempo,” it is suggested by *Grove Music Online* as an equivalent for the more familiar “harmonic rhythm,” and I find it appropriate to my discussion, which is concerned only with the rate or tempo of the harmonies.

shorter lyric that was complete in itself and had no relation to the *pantun* in progress. In the next melodic cycle, the first twelve bars would be taken up by the concluding lines of the *pantun*, and the remaining four bars could again be filled by the instruments or by another short lyric.⁵⁹ The short “extra” lyric (my term) could be sung by the same person who sang the *pantun* lines, but often it was sung by a different singer for contrast. In the recording partially transcribed in Transcription 2, the first and second verses have no “extra” lyric, but the third verse does; I have appended it to the transcription, without showing the whole of the third verse.

5.3. Popular kroncong, phase II, ca. 1924-35

Then, around 1914, the curtain comes down. As in a stage play, when it rises again, we have moved ahead ten years. There has been a crucial change in the tempo of the music, but there has also been a more fundamental shift: *kroncong* is fully a popular music, largely disseminated by media, and it is no longer an adjunct of the *stambul* theater. It is now the province of professional musicians and amateur groups aspiring to professional standards, and it has lost its tight association with the city of Batavia and the Eurasian performers and audiences there. It is now ubiquitous, the predominant form of popular music in Indonesia.

⁵⁹ The only writer to remark on these “extra” lyrics is Andjar Any (1983:83). He calls them *pantun*, which is confusing but technically accurate, since studies of Malay/Indonesian literature report *pantun* ranging from two lines up to forty, and these couplets have the character of condensed *pantun*. Here are two of the two-line lyrics that I have transcribed from a recording of *Nacht Souvenir Weltevreden* (Odeon X 112099): (1) *Kue pancong kulitnya putih / Lagu keroncong rusakin hati*. (“Pancong cake is white outside, / Kroncong songs break your heart.”) (2) *Kue pancong di pinggir kali / Lagu keroncong sedap sekali*. (“Pancong cake on river bank, / Kroncong songs are lovely to hear.”) The *pancong* cake has no discursive relation to *kroncong*; it is only there for the sake of the rhyme. The fun of the lyric is in the disparity between sound and sense: semantically one line is unconnected to the other, but aurally they are closely linked. As I suggested in footnote 31, the same play of rhyming incongruity enlivens the four-line *pantun* that are standard in *kroncong* lyrics.

KRONTJONG ORKEST „DE SPIN”



Perkoempoelan ahli-krontjong di Djawa Wetan jang terkenal bagoes,
dan njaring soewaranja.

25 c.M. f 2.50

- | | |
|---|---|
| 30057 Gamboes Malang
Nacht Serenade | <i>ternjanji oleh Djari
vioolsolo S. Abdoellah</i> |
| 30058 Krontjong Columbia
Tjahaja Malem | <i>vioolsolo S. Abdoellah
ternjanji oleh Rachman</i> |
| 30059 Krontjong De Bliksem
van Malang
Krontjong Korat Karit | <i>ternjanji oleh Rachman
ternjanji oleh Rachman en Djari</i> |
| 30060 Lenggang Siang
Dendang Malang | <i>ternjanji oleh Djari
ternjanji oleh Rachman en Djar!</i> |
| 30061 Krontjong Rachman Item
Indië bij Nacht | <i>ternjanji oleh Rachman
ternjanji oleh anak ketjil Moedari</i> |
| 30062 Moeritskoe Si Ketjil
Melajang Siang | <i>ternjanji oleh anak ketjil Moedari
ternjanji oleh Johny Jang Sadimin</i> |
| 30063 Klein Schoon Indië
Slamet Tinggal | <i>ternjanji oleh anak ketjil Moedari
ternjanji oleh Johny Jang Sadimin</i> |

Figure 5.4. A page from the Columbia catalogue ca. 1930 shown in Figure 3.2. This page advertises a *kroncong* group from East Java, Krontjong Orkest "De Spin."

By the mid-1920s, *stambul* theater was seen as stiff and old-fashioned. In 1925, a Chinese-Indonesian businessman, T. D. Tio, Jr., together with his wife, the actress and singer Miss Riboet (1900-1965), formed a new theater company, the Maleische Operette Gezelschap Orion; they were joined the next year by the popular author and journalist Njoo Cheong Seng. Under their leadership, Orion blew away the cobwebs of *stambul*, tightening up the action and shortening performances, writing new plays on contemporary themes, dispensing with old conventions (such as the *ladon* opening, where the actors lined up at the front of the stage and characters introduced themselves in song), and taking the love songs out of the love scenes. Historians see Orion and other companies that followed Orion's lead as making a decisive break with *stambul* and instituting a more modern form of theater.⁶⁰

By 1925, the *concoors kroncong* had become a popular event at night fairs and other public festivities, not only in Batavia but throughout Java. My figures for *concoors kroncong*, though far from comprehensive, are suggestive: the first I know of outside Batavia was held in Surabaya in December 1918, but by 1921 the idea had spread widely in East Java, with *concoors* in Surabaya, Probolinggo, and Pasuruan, and four in Malang in that one year. In 1926 there were six in Surabaya, two in Malang, one in Gempol-Porong, and four in Batavia.⁶¹

The *concoors*, then, was by the mid-1920s an important performance context for *kroncong*, along with the theater. The principal model for *concoors* was now competitions between groups. The big night fairs in Batavia, Surabaya, and Bandung might hold series of *concoors* leading to a championship: the first might be for local groups, then one for regional

⁶⁰ Tzu You 1939:10. Abdulkadir & Rosdy write (1963:159): “[Orion etc.] were no longer *stambul* [*bukan setambul lagi*]; they had more of the character of *toneel* or modern *sandiwara*, although their performances were still interspersed with cabaret and vaudeville entertainment, in accord with popular taste of the time.”

⁶¹ And, taking the count one notch further: in 1929 there were three in Surabaya, one in Malang, one in Batavia, one in Gempol-Porong, three in Semarang, two in Surakarta, and three in Medan.

groups, e.g. groups from East Java, and finally one for “all Java.” The focus was on singers: thus a “women’s *concours kroncong*” was a competition among *kroncong* groups with female singers (though their accompanists were usually male). Groups with male singers competed against each other but did not compete against groups with female singers. These competitions were orderly affairs, with juries assigning points to each group. The *adu pantun*, in both its mock-romantic and combative forms, seems to have become obsolete.

It is not clear from published reports whether *kroncong* continued to be performed for neighborhood weddings, nor whether street *kroncong* groups continued to trawl the *kampung*. Both seem likely, but there would have been an ever-widening gap between the *kroncong* heard in neighborhoods and the professionalized public *kroncong*. This gap was further widened when recording resumed. There was still, however, a market for small books of *pantun* and *syair*, which could be used by amateur singers to increase their stock of verses. (See Figure 5.5.)

The first new recordings were made by the Batavia producer Tio Tek Hong, probably in late 1925, and were issued on his new label in early 1926. These included, along with other popular tunes, three *kroncong*: *Krontjong Park* (its title indicating its association with the *concours* context), *Krontjong Sanggoeriang*, and *Krontjong Melajang*. With the latter two we have something new, in that the songs have distinctive titles, no longer the generic *Krontjong* or the only slightly less generic *Krontjong-plus-place* or *Krontjong-plus-context*. In another respect, however, the Tio Tek Hong records are still old-fashioned. Like *kroncong* records before 1915, they identify their singers only by gender: *Krontjong Park* was issued in two versions, one sung by *lelaki*, “man,” and the other by *prempoean*, “woman,” and *Krontjong*

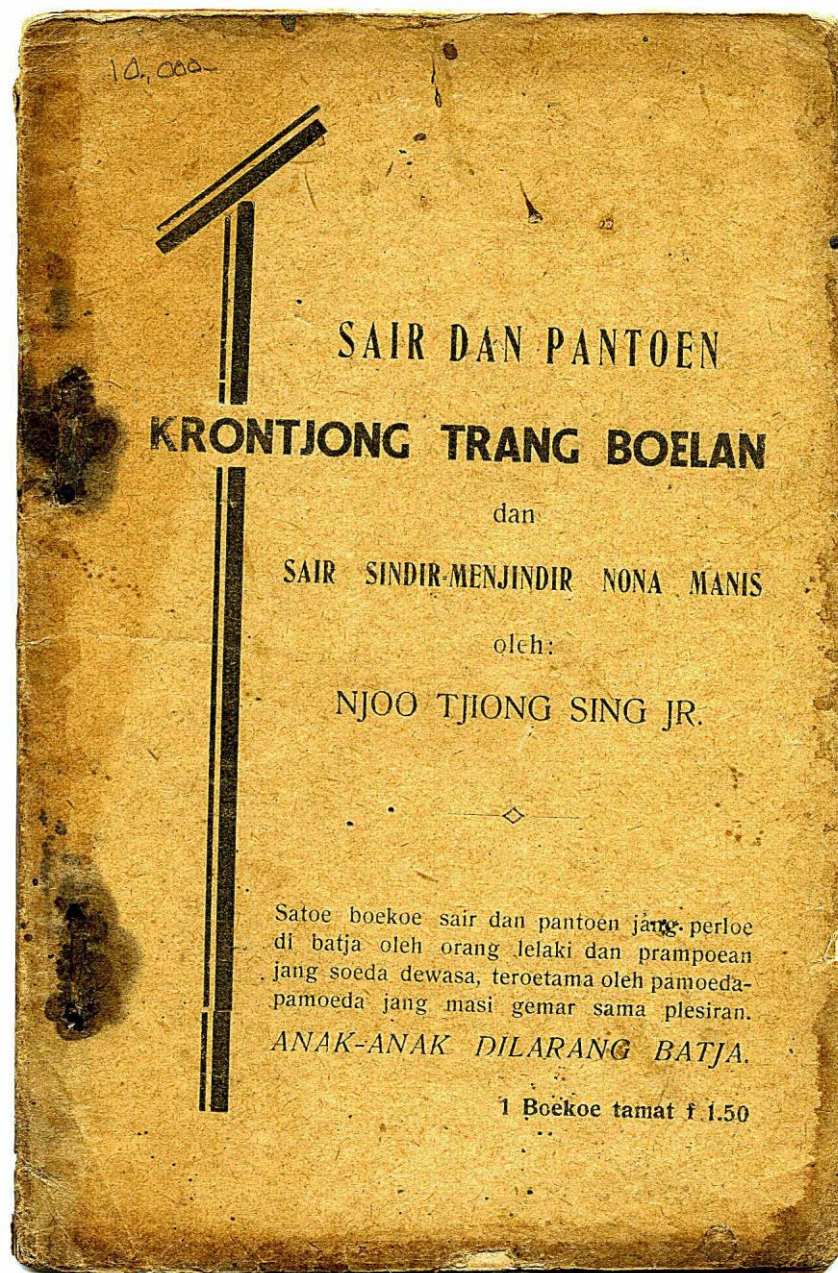


Figure 5.5. A collection of *syair* and *pantun*, first published in 1922 (Salmon 1981: 263). The title mentions *kroncong*, but it is not clear what the connection is. The notice near the bottom says that the book is intended for adults, particularly for young people “who still like to have fun.” Children are forbidden to read it.

Sanggoeriang and *Krontjong Melajang* were sung by *lelaki*. But sometime in 1926 or 1927, Beka recorded at least twelve *kroncong* with distinctive titles *and* with the singer identified by name on the label—making Miss Riboet a modernizing pioneer in *kroncong* as well as the theater.

Form and tempo. Let us look at one of Miss Riboet's 1926-27 recordings: *Krontjong Moeritskoe* (audio example 4/Transcription 4). The most striking change here is, as I have already suggested, the tempo.⁶² The sequence of chords is essentially the same in Miss Riboet's recording and the *Lagoe Moeritskoe* from ca. 1909 (audio example 3/Transcription 3)—it is the basic *kroncong asli* chord sequence. But where the earlier version moved at a tempo of 92-97 qpm, Miss Riboet's tempo is 52-54 qpm, nearly half the earlier speed. The earlier harmonic tempo was 23 to 24.5 chords per minute; Miss Riboet's harmonic tempo is 13 to 13.5. It will be remembered that before 1915 *Morisko* and the *Nacht Souvenirs* were differentiated from ordinary *kroncong* by their somewhat slower tempo, and also by the omission of the word *kroncong* in the title. By 1926 these distinctions no longer seem to hold: Miss Riboet's *Moeritskoe* is explicitly a *kroncong*, and the very next recording she made (matrix number 27762, following *Krontjong Moeritskoe's* matrix number 27761) was another *kroncong*, *Krontjong Selamat Tinggal*, at exactly the tempo of her *Krontjong Moeritskoe* (52 qpm). Several of her 1926-27 *kroncong* have tempos in the range 52-56 qpm.

Kroncong had slowed down to stay. One statement of a *kroncong* verse now took roughly twice as much time to sing as it had before, and except for an occasional comedic or

⁶² Another, minor change that should be noted is that Miss Riboet and her musicians do not shift to the II chord in the second line of the Figure 5.2 schema; instead they stay on V for four chords before moving to IV. In her next recording, *Krontjong Selamat Tinggal*, the II chord occurs in its usual place in the schema.

retrospective recording (such as S. Abdullah's *Krontjong Tahun 1910*, "Kroncong of 1910," [Canary HS 331], recorded ca. 1940), there was no move to return to the pre-1915 tempo. But Miss Riboet's lugubrious arrangements, with four slow quarter-notes to each very slow chord, would, I think, have quickly killed off the genre, had steps not been taken to perk things up. The solution was to double the rate of subdivision: instead of four beats to each slow chord, the instruments played eight beats. The accompaniment patterns at this 8:1 ratio of subdivision sometimes stated each chord tone only once; often, however, they stated each one twice (making the ratio of subdivision 8:2 or 4:1, though the *tempo* of the subdivisions stayed the same).⁶³ It is convenient to treat both of these slowed-down, double-length versions as 32-bar forms, to distinguish them from the earlier 16-bar form.⁶⁴ The schemata for the two versions are shown in Figure 5.6(a) and 5.5(b). In Figure 5.6(a), the 16 chords are stated once, with rests in between to show the augmentation; in Figure 5.6(b), each of the 16 chords is repeated.

⁶³ It is intriguing to note that these procedures in *kroncong* parallel the change that occurs in Central Javanese gamelan music when the ensemble passes from one *irama* (roughly, tempo) to a conceptually slower one—e.g. from *irama dados* to *irama wilet*. The "main" melody (a debated concept, but anyone who has played this music knows what I mean) slows down to nearly half speed; then the subdividing instruments double the ratio of their subdivision of the main melody tones; and then the main melody doubles its own speed. This doubling may occur audibly, with twice as many tones as previously, or it may occur through the insertion of conceptual rests between each melody tone (precisely as in Figure 5.6[a]). Doubling the melody restores the ratio of subdivision to what it was in the earlier *irama*, but the melody is now twice as long as it had been. Despite this congruence, it is utterly implausible that the tempo change in *kroncong* could have been influenced by Javanese gamelan music. *Irama* change is a structural progression audible in the performance of most gamelan pieces, as musicians move from one *irama* to another; whereas in *kroncong* the change took place in history but is not recapitulated in the music. A *kroncong* piece stays at one basic tempo throughout. (The ratio of subdivision may double, in a practice that Kornhauser reports [1972:141] under the name *irama dua*, "second *irama*." But this is merely what in jazz is called "double-time," unaccompanied by augmentation of the underlying structure.) The homology between changes in *kroncong*'s harmonic tempo over a span of years and *irama* change during a single performance of a *gendhing* is striking but not, ultimately, illuminating—though it is instructive to understand why not.

⁶⁴ Not only convenient, but in accordance with convention. While most contemporary notations of *kroncong* show the form as having 28 bars (under the misapprehension discussed in footnote 8), they do *not* show them as having 14 bars: that is, the doubling of the structure, whether by chord repetition or augmentation, is now everywhere accepted. See, for example, the ten volumes of melodies compiled by Muchlis (1987-95), or the two by Sugiyanto (n.d.). In contrast, Tio Tek Hong's volumes from the 1920s show all *kroncong* and *morisko* melodies as having 16 bars. Despite Kusbini's statement that *kroncong* melodies are 28 bars long, two of the three *kroncong* notations in his 1972 article (*Krontjong Moresco* and *Krontjong Kewadjiban Manusia*) show 32-bar repeating units. The third is *Krontjong Kemajoran*, which he notates in 16 bars (again, see footnote 8).

Kroncong Mata Harie (recorded 1926-27; audio example 5, not transcribed) is an example of the schema in Figure 5.6(a)—16 chords spread out over 32 bars, with 8:1 subdivision of the chords (thus 4:1 subdivision of the bars). *Krontjong Concours* (issued March 1927; audio example 6/Transcription 5) is an instance of the schema in Figure 5.6(b), with 4:1 subdivision of 32 chords over 32 bars.

I - I -	I -*	I -
V - II -	V -	V -
IV - IV -	I -	V -
I - I -	I -	V -

(a) *each chord of 16-bar schema doubled in length (augmented)*

I I I I	I I*	I I
V V II II	V V	V V
IV IV IV IV	I I	V V
I I I I	I I	V V

(b) *each chord of 16-bar schema repeated*

Figure 5.6. *Kroncong after 1925: the 32-bar form.*[†]
*The vocal usually begins in the bar marked with *.*

[†]Cf. Figure 5.3. All chords have the same duration. This is just the skeleton; some chords may be enhanced (e.g., I before IV may become I₇), internal IV-V-I cadences may be inserted in a string of I chords; a V may be inserted between the last IV and first I of line 3. As in Figure 5.3, a single strophe is shown. The pattern of repetition and the use of a final tonic chord are as described for Figure 5.3.

The crucial thing to recognize, when considering the 32-bar schemata in Figure 5.6, is that the *harmonic tempo*, the rate of change from one harmony to another,⁶⁵ is the same in both, regardless of whether the chords are augmented or repeated. Similarly, counting the subdivision as 8:1 over 16 chords or 4:1 over 32 chords does not in itself affect the harmonic tempo, and neither does the doubling or even quadrupling of the ratio of subdivision (to 8:1 or 16:1 over 32 chords) that is frequently heard in 1930s recordings. The typical harmonic tempo

⁶⁵ Figuring from one *initial point of change* to another—that is, for example, from the *first* V chord in line 2 of Figure 5.6(b) to the first II chord, not from the second V chord.

in the second phase of recording (1925-35) was 11-13 chords per minute, counting 16 chords in 32 bars, as in Figure 5.6(a), or 22-26 chords per minute, counting 32 chords in 32 bars, as in Figure 5.6(b).⁶⁶

The effect of the slow-down was to permit more differentiation of melody, more melodic freedom, than had been possible at the earlier, faster tempos. It is this differentiation that justifies the distinct titles that proliferate in *kroncong* after 1925: where before 1915 only a handful of different melodies, shared by many singers, was available for negotiating the *kroncong* chord sequence, after 1925 there were hundreds.

Instrumentation and idiom. The slower tempos also permitted the development of new instrumental practices that eventually became defining features of the standard *kroncong* idiom. At pre-1915 tempos, the cello drum, walking guitar, and *cak-cuk* interplay would have been simply frenetic; at post-1925 tempos, they can be smooth and attractive. It took a while, however, for these new devices to emerge. One of the first of the new recordings, *Krontjong Park* (Tio Tek Hong 478, recorded ca. late 1925), has no cello drum and no guitar, and it has only the on-beat (*cuk*) half of the *cak-cuk* figuration. Miss Riboet's *Krontjong Moeritskoe* (audio example 4, recorded 1926 or 1927) has no *cak-cuk* at all, no cello drum, and no guitar. (Another peculiarity of Miss Riboet's recordings is that she favored the piano—definitely not a standard *kroncong* instrument—at least until 1929.) An early instance of cello drum is heard on *Krontjong Concours* (audio example 5, recorded late 1926 or early 1927), along with *cuk*

⁶⁶ For the purposes of determining the harmonic tempo, I consider the structure in Figure 5.6(a)—which is, of course, identical with the pre-1915 structure in Figure 5.3, aside from the intercalated rests—to be the *basic* structure of *kroncong asli*, and the structure in Figure 5.6(b) to be a variant of it. The harmonic tempo of *kroncong asli*, then, is the rate at which the 16 chords of the structure in Figures 5.3 and 5.6(a) are sounded. The diagnostic crux is the movement from V to II and back to V (or, if that is absent, as in Miss Riboet's *Krontjong Moeritskoe*, I-V-I). Even when, as in Figure 5.8, extra chords expand the structure to 33, 34, 40, or some other number of bars, the V-II-V movement is nearly always retained and can serve for determining the harmonic tempo.

(without *cak*); guitar is also present, but it does not “walk.” Walking guitar and *cak-cuk* are heard in *Krontjong De Klauw* (His Master’s Voice N 2652, issued early 1929), but without cello drum. A much later recording, *Oh, Boenga Melati* (audio example 7/Transcription 6, recorded ca. 1939; Figure 5.7), which is explicitly in the *kroncong asli* style, has cello drum, walking guitar, and *cuk*, but no *cak*. Thus all of the elements and instruments of the standard idiom are present in one recording or another by the end of the 1930s, but they are not yet fused as a complex.⁶⁷ The standard idiom seems to be a later configuration, combining various traits that before World War II were considered optional.⁶⁸



Figure 5.7. Label for Canary HS 235, “Oh, Boenga Melati” (ca. 1939), with picture of the singer, Koesbini, on the label. The song is given in audio example 6/transcription 7.

⁶⁷ *Cak-cuk* is something of a question. Most of the pre-1942 recordings I have heard have *cuk* without *cak*, and even when both are present the interplay is rudimentary. It may be that *cak-cuk* did not fully develop until after Independence.

⁶⁸ Clear examples of the standard *kroncong* idiom—with intricate *cak-cuk*—may be heard in volume 2 of the Smithsonian Folkways *Music of Indonesia* series (Yampolsky 1991), recorded in 1990.

5.4. The last phase of popular kroncong, 1935-42

Lyrics and melody. The format of pre-1915 *kroncong* lyrics—in one strophe, the first two lines of a *pantun* quatrain, plus an extra, unrelated couplet, complete in itself; followed in the next strophe by the last two lines of the quatrain and another couplet—held its own into the mid-1930s. But the slowing-down and stretching-out of the melody meant that only two strophes (plus instrumental introduction and closing) would fit in a three-minute recording. It also required that the lines of the *pantun* and second couplet be extended to fill twice as much melody. To achieve this, singers increased their use of vocables (*lah, ai*) and filler words (*indung, sayang, etc.*) and introduced repetition of words or short phrases from the verse lines.

Later in the 1930s this structure began to recede, increasingly replaced by strings of discursively related couplets, sometimes retaining the *pantun*'s ABAB rhyme scheme but discarding the *sampiran-isi* structure of contrasting couplets within a unitary quatrain.⁶⁹ This development in the lyrics had an interesting corollary in the music. When the verse form was *pantun*, requiring two strophes of the melody to complete one quatrain, there was an in-built contrast between the first three lines of the structure, which were taken up with the *pantun*, and the fourth line, which was devoted to the “extra” lyric (or alternatively, before 1915, to an instrumental passage). The contrast was further marked by the frequent use of a second singer in the fourth line. In the couplet and non-*pantun* quatrain texts that began to replace *pantun* circa 1935, there was no longer a structural distinction between the first three lines and the last. As a result, certain *musical* correspondences that had been obscured by that distinction

⁶⁹ According to Andjar Any (1983:83), the first *kroncong* with a non-*pantun* text appeared in 1935. Any is always interesting but not always reliable. The song he names is *Rindu Malam*, whose composer-author is, he says, unknown. As it happens, a song of that title is listed in Burhan ([1983/84]:79) as a 1939 composition by Ismail Marzuki. Same song? Different song? One doesn't know. Nevertheless, a date ca. 1935 seems right.

now became apparent. The third and fourth lines of the schema in Figure 5.6(b) have the same chord sequence (I I V V) in their second half; and the first half of the fourth line (I I I I) echoes the second half of the first line, where the vocal typically enters. Now that the need to contrast the last line with the other three had disappeared, composers began to introduce melodic repetition to link passages with the same underlying harmony. Examples are seen in *Oh, Boenga Melati* (transcription 6). The opening phrase of the vocal (“*aku kagum,*” end of line 1 of the schema) recurs at bar 26 (line 3); and the melody of bars 21-25 (end of line 3/beginning of line 4 of the schema) is repeated exactly in bars 29-32 and the first bar of the next verse (end of line 4/beginning of line 1). This pattern of melodic phrases, ABCDA’(or E)D, is common in *kroncong asli* composed after 1935.⁷⁰

Filler words and other line extenders continued to be used, even in the new couplet forms, but some members of the *kroncong* audience had begun to find the verbal padding annoying. A radio listener wrote in to a station in Batavia in 1936 to urge that *kroncong* singers “arrange their words” in a more pleasing and satisfying manner, avoiding “boring” words like *si nona manis, nona disayang, indung-indung,* and *aiaiaia*. “It seems that [now] they sing whatever comes into their head. Even if they write the words down beforehand, the verses have no connection to each other.”⁷¹ In another radio bulletin, an author wrote in 1941 that “many

⁷⁰ It is found, for example, in Budiman B.J.’s *Kroncong Segenggam Harapan*, composed in 1978 (see footnote 76).

⁷¹ “Salah seorang anggota Voro soedah menoelis soerat kepada Pengoeroes dengan permintaan, hendaklah jang menjanji ‘Krontjong’ didalam Studio menjoesoen perkataannja, sehingga menjenangkan dan memoeskannja hati jang mendengarkannja. [Paragraph] Sampai sekarang jang terdengar moedah membosankan jang mendengarnja. Jang sering terdengar, ialah perkataan: si nona manis, nona disayang, indoeng-indoeng dan aiaiaia [Ellipsis in original] [Paragraph] Apa jang dinjanjikan, roepanja apa sadja jang pada waktoe itoe melajang dalam hati si penjanji. Djikalau ada jang ditoelis doeloe, sebeloenja sa’ir itoe dinjanjikan, roepanja sa’ir-sa’ir itoe tida ada hoeboenganja satoe pada lain. Djadi lama2 membosankan djoega.” These are the words of the listener as paraphrased by VORO’s director, Abdoel Rachman Saleh (“A.R.”), who reports them in the station’s monthly bulletin, *Pewarta V.O.R.O.* (Saleh 1936). Saleh’s attitude is that the suggestion “deserves attention,” though he hastens to add that he means no disrespect to *kroncong* singers. The problem, he thinks, is rather with the nature

people dislike *kroncong*, because they are embarrassed by the words *nona manis*, *indung disayang*, *jiwa manis*, *zoetelief*, etc. It's not the melody they don't like, it's the words."⁷²

Armijn Pané, in his novel *Belenggu* (1940), shows his character Dr. Sukartono musing as he listens to his favorite *kroncong* singer on the radio: "He liked [her] singing. The melody fit with the words, it wasn't a sad melody with happy words. . . . She didn't repeat herself, as if she'd run out of words, and she didn't use extra words like *si nona manis*, *liep*, *indung sayang*, *ai sayang*, and the rest. There was content, the words were about something; she didn't just ramble like other singers."⁷³ This demonstrates to Sukartono that "*kroncong* in general, the *kroncong* of ordinary people, could be advanced." A year later, Pané said much the same thing in his own voice:

People no longer accept meaningless words [in *kroncong*]. Words like *indung sayang*, *nona manis*, *liep*, *jiwa* are less frequently heard now. Listeners have different standards now. This was clear from the requests that were submitted to the P.P.R.K. [a radio station allied with the nationalist movement] for 'listener's choice' broadcasts. What was mainly requested was songs with content. . . .

It is not only *kroncong* that has advanced, but also its 'people' [i.e., its performers and audience]. How much *kroncong* has changed is evident from the question a friend recently asked: should today's *kroncong* still be called *kroncong*?

of the poetry. His theory is that young people are forsaking *kroncong* for Western popular songs because they want something they're not getting from *kroncong*, namely narrative poetry about the sorrows of love. As a model, he offers an excerpt from an overwrought Dutch poem (surprisingly suffused with images of the Cross and the Rosary). Regarding the listener's complaint: it is no doubt true that in live performance, including radio (which at that time was always live), *pantun* could be strung together in no particular order, like the verses of country blues in the US. One cannot, however, confirm this from the 78s, because after 1925 and the tempo slow-down, *kroncong* recordings contained only one *pantun*, sung over two verses of the melody.

⁷² "*Banjak orang tidak soeka kepada kerontjong, sebab ia maloe mendengar perkataan nona manis, indoeng disayang, djiwa manis, zoetelief, d.ll., [sic] tetapi sebetoelnja boekanlah lagoenja jang tidak disoekainja, melainkan 'kata-kata'nja*" (Loebis 1941:5; emphasis in original).

⁷³ "*Lagunya sepadan dengan kata-katanya, tiada asal lagu saja, lagu sedih dengan kata-kata riang. . . . Katanya tiada yang berulang-ulang, seolah-olah kekurangan kata, dia tiada memakai kata tambahan dan penyambung, kata 'si nona manis,' 'liep,' 'indung sayang,' 'ai sayang' dsb. [Paragraph] Isinya ada, ada pokok pikirannya, tiada melantur seperti penyanyi lain-lain. . . . Dia insaf, nyanyian kroncong itu umum, nyanyian di kalangan rakyat, dapat dimajukan*" (Pané 1984[1940]:63; my ellipsis).

My friend posed this question because the *word kroncong* has [negative] connotations that no longer come to mind when we hear the songs themselves.

Now is not the first time that an art of the masses (*volkskunst*) like *kroncong* has risen to a higher level. *Kroncong* may not reach that high level immediately, but certainly it will, not too long from now. And it is proper for Indonesian intellectuals to contribute their help and leadership in advancing this art.⁷⁴

These quotations indicate that, at least in educated circles, the filler words were considered old-fashioned and embarrassingly lower-class by the late 1930s. Despite Pané's praise, many *kroncong* lyrics of the late 1930s were quite trivial, and by abandoning the *pantun* structure they lost even the aesthetic pleasure afforded by rhyme and meaning working against each other. In reaction to the increasing vapidness of popular *kroncong* lyrics, and perhaps in response to the criticism of intellectuals, some composers and writers began to create deliberately poetic lyrics in new verse-forms having nothing to do with *pantun* and containing little or no padding. They also developed a more elaborate (in particular, more chromatic) melodic style to suit these high-flown lyrics. *Oh, Boenga Melati* (audio example 7), sung by Koesbini (the same Kusbini whose 1972 article on *kroncong* has been cited several times here) is an example.

Structure and idiom. One challenge musicians experienced as a result of the slower tempo was how to make the long passages in the tonic chord interesting. In the 1930s they

⁷⁴ "Orang tidak senang lagi dengan kata-kata yang tidak berarti. Kata-kata seperti 'indoeng sajang', 'nona manis', 'liep', 'djiwa' oempamanja soedah makin koerang kedengaran. Memang pendengar dimasa yang achir ini memakai oekoeran yang lain. Hal itoe ternjata dari permintaan yang dimadjoekan orang kepada P.P.R.K. pada waktow siaran mana soeka. Jang banjak diminta orang ialah njanjian yang ada isinja. . . . [Paragraph] [B]oekan kerontjongnja sadja yang madjoe, tetapi poen djoega 'orang'-nja. Betapa djaoehnja beroebah kerontjong itoe ternjata dari pertanjaan salah seorang teman baroe-baroe ini, katanja bolehkah lagi kerontjong yang sekarang ini diseboet 'kerontjong'? Pertanjaan itoe dimadjoekannja, karena menoeroet pendapatnja perkataan kerontjong itoe menimboelkan pikiran dan perasaan yang lain, ja'ni pikiran dan perasaan yang kini tidak lagi timboel kalau kita mendengarkan lagoe kerontjong itoe. [Paragraph] Boekanlah baroe sekali ini sadja soeatoe kesenian ra'jat djelata (*volkskunst*) sebagai kerontjong ini mentjapai tingkatan yang lebih tinggi. Barangkali tingkatan yang tinggi itoe tidak akan lekas tertjapai, tetapi pasti dalam waktow yang tidak terlaloe lama. Dan dalam memadjoekan kesenian ini kaoem intellect Indonesia patoet memberikan bantoean dan pimpinan" (Pané 1941:259-60; emphasis in the original; my ellipsis).

began to address the problem by tinkering with the *kroncong asli* structure. An easy solution was to insert subdominant or dominant chords, or both, into the tonic stream, creating incidental cadences, but over the course of the 1930s more substantial structural alterations were introduced: additional bars could be added in the vocal, or the instrumental interlude between vocals could be lengthened, such that it was no longer predictable that 32 bars after the first vocal the next one would begin.

Some examples of 1930s *kroncong* structures are given in Figure 5.8, in the form of chord schemata. For ease of comparison, I have arranged them so that corresponding sequences occur in the same left-right location in all schemata, though they may not be shown in the same lines. Ensemble introductions before the vocals begin are included in the schemata, but instrumental solos before the ensemble comes in are not. To read a schema in Figure 5.8, assume that the music starts with the first bar in the schema and plays straight through to the :|| mark, then returns to the ||: and plays again until the :||. At that point it either returns to the first ||: and plays until the ¶, which would be a *fine* in staff notation; or, if there are bars beyond the :||, the music continues past the :|| to the ¶.

The diagrams in Figure 5.8 are:

5.8(a) – the standard *kroncong asli* 32-bar structure, corresponding to Figure 5.6(b) but taken from *Krontjong Concours* (His Master's Voice N 2032, issued 1927; audio example 6).

5.8(b) – the schema for *Krontjong Cuban Love Song* (Odeon A 204400, issued 1933), with a IV chord inserted at two points.

5.4(c) – *Tjari Hiboeran* (Odeon A 278174, issued in or before 1938), showing four substitutions of V where I occurs in the usual schema. Four bars are added to the vocal and four to the instrumental introduction/interlude, making the repeating unit 40 bars long.

5.4(d) – *Krontjong Lollypop* (Beka B 88348, recorded ca. 1936). V is substituted for I four times, and I for V once. There is also an extra bar inserted at the end of the fourth line.

5.4(e) – *Meliat Kaadaan* (Odeon A 278385, issued 1939?) substitutes two V chords for I chords at the end of the second line. It also includes a 32-bar vocal and an 8-bar jazz introduction/interlude, making a 40-bar structure similar to 5.4(c).

5.4(f) – *Hawa Malaise* (Beka B 88348, the flip side of *Krontjong Lollypop*, recorded ca. 1936) departs quite far from the basic structure, significantly altering the harmony of the third line. The vocal has 26 bars and the instrumental interlude 8, making the repeating unit 34 beats long.

5.4(g) – *Ada Goela Ada Semoet* (His Master's Voice NS 526, issued March 1939) has a 29-bar vocal coupled with the longest instrumental interlude of any of these examples, 15 bars, making 46 bars between corresponding points. Because the potential repeating unit is so long, the repetition is incomplete, ending 4 bars short of a second complete statement. Again, dominants are substituted for tonics in several places. This piece is heard in audio example 8.

What we see in these examples is the breakdown of the earlier consensus among performers and composers regarding the structure of *kroncong*. The impetus for this revisionism may have been in part boredom with regular *kroncong*; another component is clearly the desire to combine *kroncong* with the idioms of foreign popular music. All of the

songs in Figure 5.8 are identified on the records as foreign in one way or another: *Krontjong Cuban Love Song* obviously refers to Cuba; *Tjari Hiboeran* is characterized on the label as a *krontjong blues* and *Meliat Kaadaan* as a *krontjong blue*; *Krontjong Lollypop* is a *krontjong foxtrot*; *Hawa Malaise* is a *krontjong rumba*, and *Ada Goela Ada Semoet* a *rumba krontjong*. Except for *Krontjong Cuban Love Song*, they all dispense with elements characteristic of earlier *kroncong* (*cak-cuk*, cello drum, rhythmically free violin and flute) in favor of features of the appropriate foreign idiom (clave, jazz inflections, dance rhythms), and none (again excepting *Krontjong Cuban Love Song*) has *pantun* lyrics. On the other hand, almost all of them retain the V-II-V and extended IV passages that are hallmarks of *kroncong*.

Had the trend shown in Figure 5.8 continued, *kroncong* would, I suspect, have disintegrated as a genre. The strongest musical energy in the late recordings comes from the musicians' encounter with North American and Latin American forms. The chord progressions that tether the recordings to *kroncong* are extraneous to that energy—they seem irrelevant to the real desire of the music, which is to be a rumba or a jazz tune. Without intervention, *kroncong asli* might well have survived as a small repertoire of songs with that specific form (as indeed it survives today), but the tangos and foxtrots would have gone off on their own.

||: *I I* I I* *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
I I I I *I I V V* :||

5.8(a). Typical *kroncong asli* structure, from *Krontjong Concours* (1927). Cf. Figure 5.6(b).

||: *I I I IV* *I* I I* *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
I I I IV *I I V V* :||

5.8(b). *Krontjong Cuban Love Song* (1933).

V V V I ||: *I I I V*
V V II II *I*I I I I*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
V I I I *I I V V*
V V I I :||

5.8(c). *Tjari Hiboeran* (≤1938).

I I I V V V V I
||: *I I I V I I* I I* *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V I*
I I I V V V V I :||
I I I V V V V I (¶ 3d x)

5.8(d). *Krontjong Lollypop* (ca.1936).

||: *I I I I* *I I V V*
I I¶ I I* *I I V V*
V V II II *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
I I I I *I I V V* :||

5.8(e). *Meliat Kaadaan* (1939?).

I V I V I V I I
V V I I I I I I ||: *I**
iii iii vi vi(II) *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
I I I I *I I V V I*
I I I I *I V V I* :||
I V I V I V I V

5.8(f). *Hawa Malaise* (ca. 1936).

I V I V I I I I
||: *V V I V I* I I I*
V V II II *V V V V*
IV IV IV IV *I I V V*
I V I I *I I V V*
I V I I *I I V V*
I V¶ I I *I I* :||

5.8(g). *Ada Goela Ada Semoet* (1939) (audio example 8).

Figure 5.8. Chord schemata for various 1930s *kroncong* melodies. The typical schema is shown as 5.7(a). Instrumental passages are shown in bold italics. ||: and :|| indicate the beginning and end of the repeating unit, and ¶ the ending point the last time through. * marks the bar in which the vocal begins.

But in the event it was the *kroncong rumbas* and *kroncong blues* and other hybrids that vanished, while *kroncong asli* survived (in standardized form), alongside the new *langgam kroncong*, which emerged at the very end of the era and did not, so far as I know, make it onto 78s.⁷⁵ What saved *kroncong asli* and eliminated the hybrids was the Japanese wartime occupation of Indonesia from 1942 to 1945. The Japanese banned the music of enemy nations, including the United States and Cuba, and sought to expunge those foreign influences from *kroncong* (Brugmans 1982:203). There was a sudden void where all the foxtrots and rumbas had been, and *kroncong asli* and especially *langgam kroncong* rushed in to fill it. In Andjar Any's phrase (Any 1983:84), *kroncong* (by which he means what was left after the foreign forms were expelled) "caught the wind"; its competitors killed off, it was perfectly positioned to become the popular music of the Japanese occupation and, later, that of the Indonesian Revolution (1945-49). And after that decade of suffering and struggle, it was virtually inevitable that *kroncong* should become enshrined, as it is today, as the musical symbol of Indonesia's heroic age.

⁷⁵ Amir Pasaribu, a champion of European art music, wrote (1955:54-55): "Evidently the term *langgam* is nothing but camouflage to conceal [a tune's] origins in Hawaii or Broadway or Tin Pan Alley. Every new schlager [=hit song] in Indonesia now is called a *langgam*. . . . '*Langgam*' is a substitute for older terms like *kroncong foxtrot*, *kroncong rumba*, *kroncong tango*, *joged kroncong*. Now any new schlager that is not a *kroncong*, *stambul*, *gambus*, or *joget* goes into the *langgam* bag [*karung-langgam*], sometimes called *langgam modern*." If we ignore his disgruntled tone, Pasaribu's statement may explain why (so far as I can tell) no *langgam kroncong* were recorded. If *langgam* essentially meant AABA popular tunes, then record companies might not have wanted to record them in the *kroncong* idiom, since the money seemed to be in jazz and Latin arrangements. It made sense to record *kroncong asli* melodies in the "modern" styles, but the reverse—modern melodies in *kroncong* style—could have seemed like a waste of good tunes.

5.5. Coda: slowing down as an adaptive strategy

As we have seen, sometime between 1915 and 1925 the tempo of *kroncong* slowed down to roughly half the former speed.⁷⁶ In some cases (e.g. Miss Riboet's transitional *Krontjong Moeritskoe*, audio example 4), the slowing-down is pervasive and clearly audible; in others it is masked by a compensatory increase in subdivision, such that it is really the *harmonic* tempo that is slower. In either case, overt or masked, this reduction in tempo led to many changes in *kroncong*.

We will probably never know who first slowed *kroncong* down, or whether there was a conscious reason for doing so. Rather than looking for a *decision* to slow down, it may be more useful to think of it as an evolutionary mutation, and to assess it for its effects. How did slowing down help *kroncong* adapt to its social, economic, and artistic environment?

The tempo change renewed a music that was approaching exhaustion: how much more could singers do with only (by my estimate) ten melodies? By creating, so to speak, more room in the music, the slow-down allowed greater differentiation in *kroncong* melodies, thereby enormously expanding the repertoire. It also permitted greater elaboration of the instrumental parts, leading to the development of cello drum, walking guitar, and *cak-cuk* figuration, all of which are now characteristic elements of the standard *kroncong* idiom. As Kornhauser has pointed out (1978:139), these features contribute to creating "a unified web of sound in which each instrument follows its own linear course," a web that recalls the organization of Javanese

⁷⁶ Though this is a topic for another occasion, I cannot resist pointing out that sometime between ca. 1960 and 1990, for most *kroncong* though perhaps not for all, the process was repeated. The harmonic tempo of *Kroncong Morisko* and *Kroncong Segenggam Harapan* on volume 2 of *Music of Indonesia* (Yampolsky 1991) is 6.3 or 6.4 chords per minute for the basic 16-chord sequence shown in Figure 5.6(a). This is about half the normal tempo of 1925-42.

gamelan music. (She could have pointed out as well that the steady, rapid, upper-register interplay of *cak* and *cuk* suggests the upper-register interlocking *imbal* figuration played by the two *bonang* in Javanese gamelan, or even the *kotekan* figuration of Balinese music). We could therefore say that the slow-down facilitated the indigenization of *kroncong*.⁷⁷

The slow-down benefited not only the musicians but also the recording companies. Before 1915, neither individual songs nor individual artists were named on records: the labels identified their contents only as “*Kroncong* sung by a woman” or “*Kroncong* sung by a man.” This method offered customers little reason to make repeated purchases. Record companies need to convince customers that this month’s records are different from last month’s, and song titles and artists’ names are key ways to do this. You already have Miss X’s *Krontjong Columbia*, but do you have her *Krontjong Mawar*? Or Miss Y’s *Krontjong Mawar*, very different? And what about Mr. Z’s *Krontjong Semarang*? The slower tempo offered possibilities for distinguishing one *kroncong* from another, and also for singers and groups to establish distinctive artistic personalities, thus making this kind of selling feasible as it had not been before.

The star system is a key mechanism for bringing customers back for more, but it depends on name recognition. Once recording stars were named, they could be marketed not only through records but also through the *concours kroncong*, and later through radio. The singer became a brand. This was a self-perpetuating cycle: the recording star takes part in a *concours* and attracts spectators because she is a star; she wins the championship at the

⁷⁷ A topic for yet another article: is the Nigerian popular music *jùjú* a similar case where slowing down permitted indigenization? *Jùjú* is much slower than its uptempo ancestor, palm-wine music, a cheery tonic-dominant music for guitar and voice. What filled the newly opened spaces in *jùjú* was intense drumming in traditional idiom using the drums of the Nigerian *dùndún* ensemble.

concours (that's news!), or she loses to a newcomer (*that's news!*) or to her long-term rival (that's news too!). Now the record label can market whoever won as the champion, which will bring more spectators to her next *concours*; and if there is a rivalry between the new champion and the old one, that too can be marketed (battle of the stars!).

A challenge the record industry faced in marketing *kroncong* was to distance it from the urban folk milieu. The ordinary people, the *rakyat*, did not have the money to buy gramophones or 78s. The consumer class did, but they would not buy the music of low-life rowdies. As "Factotum" wrote in the 1915 article I quoted earlier (footnote 52), "Everyone knows that *kroncong* is not a music that decent people like to hear." The social positioning of *kroncong* had to change before the records could appeal to the audience that could afford to buy them; in modern advertising terms, *kroncong* had to be rebranded. Here again, the tempo change created the necessary conditions. As melodies proliferated, the repertoire moved out of reach of the street musicians and amateur groups, who would have to know dozens of songs instead of the one or two melodies they had to know before. The gap between professional *kroncong* and the capabilities of neighborhood groups became still wider as new instruments were introduced (who in the neighborhoods would have a cello or string bass, or want to trundle it about the streets?) and new standards of vocal quality were promoted (e.g. Herlaut's operatic tone in audio example 5, Koesbini's crooning in audio example 7). And as *pantun* ceased to be the main vehicle of lyrics, singers had to memorize complete texts for many songs. A singer could no longer get through a whole night's performance—as Andjar Any (1983:83) says one could up to 1935—knowing only three *pantun*. All of these developments—not to mention the shift after 1935 towards foreign dance rhythms—served to remove *kroncong* from

the folk context, elevate its tone, and make it respectable enough to gratify the audience the record companies needed to reach.

In retrospect, then, we can see that slowing the tempo was a brilliant move for *kroncong*. But its consequences were almost certainly unforeseen by those who put it into practice. Did a group of musicians and recording company officials sit down in 1918 or 1922 and say, “If we could slow this thing down we could get a lot more mileage out of it”? It seems highly unlikely. We can more plausibly imagine a moment of spontaneous experiment that pleased the ear and caught on first with other musicians and then with the record companies. *Why* the music slowed down is an unanswerable question, but the success of the slow-down as an adaptive strategy is evident. It extended *kroncong*’s life by perhaps twenty years, allowing the genre to achieve a prominence it had not known in its earlier, uptempo phase. That success had, I think, nearly run its course by the early 1940s, but then war intervened, giving *kroncong* yet another opportunity to reinvent itself.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5

List of audio examples and transcriptions

Transcriptions 1–6

List of audio examples, accessible at

http://semioweb.msh-paris.fr/archipel/sommaires/sommaire_79_2010.htm

(click on “Accédez aux extraits sonores”)

1. *Krontjong*. Stamboel Batavia. Beka-Grand-Record 1799. Recorded January 1906. *Transcription 1*.
2. *Lagoe Krontjong*. Stamboul Batavia. Odeon 91024. Recorded 1907. *Transcription 2*.
3. *Lagoe Moeritskoe*. Prampoean [=woman] with Stamboel Batavia. Odeon 26031. Recorded ca. 1909. *Transcription 3*.
4. *Krontjong Moeritskoe*. Miss Riboet. Beka 27761 (also issued on B 15104 and B 15237). Recorded 1926 or 1927. *Transcription 4*.
5. *Krontjong Mata Harie*. Herlaut (Aer Laoet) with Beka Orkest. Beka B 15760-I. Recorded 1926 or 1927. *No transcription*.
6. *Krontjong Concours*. Muziekvereniging Indo-Batavia. His Master’s Voice N 2032. Issued March 1927. *Transcription 5*.
7. *Oh, Boenga Melati* (Krontjong Aseli). Koesbini with Canary Orkest. Canary HS 235. Issued March 1939. *Transcription 6*.
8. *Ada Goela Ada Semoet* (Rumba Krontjong). Miss Room with His Master’s Voice Orchestra. His Master’s Voice NS 526. Issued March 1939. *No transcription*.

List of transcriptions:

Transcription 1. *Krontjong*. Stamboel Batavia. Beka-Grand-Record 1799. Recorded January 1906. *Audio example 1*.

Transcription 2. *Lagoe Krontjong*. Stamboul Batavia. Odeon 91024. Recorded 1907. *Audio example 2*.

Transcription 3. *Lagoe Moeritskoe*. Prampoean [=woman] with Stamboel Batavia. Odeon 26031. Recorded ca. 1909. *Audio example 3*.

Transcription 4. *Krontjong Moeritskoe*. Miss Riboet. Beka 27761 (also issued on B 15104 and B 15237). Recorded 1926 or 1927. *Audio example 4*.

Transcription 5. *Krontjong Concours*. Muziekvereniging Indo-Batavia. His Master’s Voice N 2032. Issued March 1927. *Audio example 6*.

Transcription 6. *Oh, Boenga Melati* (Krontjong Aseli). Koesbini with Canary Orkest. Canary HS 235. Issued March 1939. *Audio example 7*.

Krontjong [1906]

♩ = 125→129

instr.

1st verse

voice

Bu-rung [...] se-ka - rang sa -yang sa -yang

8

instr.

ka-lau lah [...] no- na ma - nis ku - ting - gal a - ja.

17 **2nd verse**

voice

Sa-ya tung - gu su-dah lah la - ma sa -yang sa -yang bi - ar hi - dup

26

instr.

no - na yang ma - nis [...] [...] Kem-bang ja-gung kem-bang ja-gung a-wak ru - sak ting-gal bi - ngung.

continue to 3rd verse

The image shows a musical score for 'Krontjong [1906]'. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 1-7) is labeled '1st verse' and includes an instrumental introduction and a vocal line with lyrics 'Bu-rung [...] se-ka - rang sa -yang sa -yang'. The second system (measures 8-16) is an instrumental section with lyrics 'ka-lau lah [...] no- na ma - nis ku - ting - gal a - ja.'. The third system (measures 17-25) is labeled '2nd verse' and includes a vocal line with lyrics 'Sa-ya tung - gu su-dah lah la - ma sa -yang sa -yang bi - ar hi - dup'. The fourth system (measures 26-32) includes an instrumental section and a vocal line with lyrics 'no - na yang ma - nis [...] [...] Kem-bang ja-gung kem-bang ja-gung a-wak ru - sak ting-gal bi - ngung.'. The score ends with a double bar line and the instruction 'continue to 3rd verse'. Various musical notations such as 'instr.', 'voice', 'I', 'II', 'III', 'IV', 'V', and triplets are used throughout the score.

Transcription 1. Performed by Stamboel Batavia. From Beka Grand 1799, recorded in Batavia in 1906. Male voice, violin, flute, *kroncong* lute. Original tonic pitch: C. Instrumental register not matched to vocal register. Harmonic tempo = 31.25→32.5 chords per minute.

Lagoe Krontjong [1907]

♩ = 106 → 124

The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-7) starts with an instrumental introduction (instr.) in measure 1, followed by the first verse (1st verse) starting in measure 2. The second system (measures 8-15) continues the first verse with instrumental accompaniment (instr.) and vocal lines (voice). The third system (measures 16-23) begins the second verse (2nd verse) and includes the end of the third verse (3rd verse) and the start of the fourth verse (4th verse). Chord markings (I, IV, V, II) and triplets are used throughout. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 106 → 124.

1st verse

instr. **I** *voice* **V** **II** **V**

Air se - bu-yung me-nyi-ram [...] a - i me-nyi-ram [...]

2nd verse (start)

instr. **IV** *voice* **I** **V** **I** *instr.*

[...] no-na ma-nis se-pa-ro ma - ti.

3rd verse (last 3 bars) **continue to 4th verse**

V **I** *voice* **V** **I** **V** **I**

I-ba-rat [...] no-na ma-nis [...] etc. Ya-du ya-du sa-kit [...] ba-dan-kurin - du.

Transcription 2. Performed by Stamboul Batavia. From Odeon 91024, recorded in Batavia in 1907. Male voice, violin, flute, guitar, clapping. Original tonic pitch: C#. Instrumental register not matched to vocal register. Harmonic tempo = 26.5 → 31 chords per minute.

Transcription 3. Performed by Stamboel Batavia. From Odeon 26031, recorded in Batavia ca. 1909. Female voice, violin, flute, piano. Original tonic pitch: F#. Instrumental register not matched to vocal register. Harmonic tempo = 23→24.25 chords per minute.

Lagoe Moeritskoe [ca. 1909]

♩ = 92→97

The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of a vocal line and a violin line. The lyrics are in Indonesian. The score is divided into four verses. Performance markings include 'vln.' for violin, 'voice' for the vocal line, and Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V) indicating chord positions. Trills and triplets are also marked.

1st verse
 in-dung in - dung ai [...] yang ma-nis ke Su-ra-ba - ya.

2nd verse
 [...] [...] in-dung di-sa-yang [...]

3rd verse
 ai [...] ji-wa ke-pa - da sa - ya.

4th verse
 [...] [...] di - sa - yang in-dung in - dung ai [...] in-dung in - dung [...]

Krontjong Moeritskoe [1926 or 1927]

♩ = 52→54

instr. rubato

1st verse

I strict

voice

pno:

Bi-gi - ma-na ti-dak-nya rim

5 *V* *V (not II)* *instr.* *voice IV* *I* *V*

bang ai lah sa-yang ti-dak-nya rim-bang ba-dan hi-dup sa-yang ji-walah ma-nis du-ri- nya lah ja-tuh de-ngan lah tang-kai

13 *I* *V* *I* *instr.* *voice*

nya. Ru-jak Ban-dung ku-rang tra-si a - i mau di - san-jung no-na ti-dakdi-ka - sih. etc.

Transcription 4. Sung by Miss Riboet. From Beka B 15104, also issued as 27761, recorded 1926 or 1927. Female singer, piano, violin, flute, no guitar or *kroncong* lute. Original tonic pitch: D. Instrumental register not matched to vocal register. Harmonic tempo: 13→13.5 chords per minute.

Krontjong Concours [1927]

♩ = ca. 102

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff is an instrumental introduction marked 'instr. rubato' and '1st verse', featuring a sequence of chords labeled I, V, and I. The second staff is for female voice ('fem. voice') with lyrics 'ai [...]' and 'in-dung ma-nis', including triplet markings and a II* chord. The third staff continues the female voice with lyrics 'in-dung in-dung' and 'rem-bu-', featuring IV and V chords and triplet markings. The fourth staff is for male voice ('male voice') with lyrics 'lan.' and 'Ja-li ja-li', including triplet markings and a V chord. The fifth staff is an instrumental section ('instr.') marked '2nd verse (start)' and 'continue in 2nd verse', with a 'fem. voice' part indicated by a bracket. Chord markings I and V are present throughout the instrumental sections.

Transcription 5. Performed by Muziekvereniging Indo-Batavia; singer not identified. From HMV N 2032, recorded in Batavia, issued in March 1927. Female and male singers, 2 violins, flute, *kroncong* lute or ukulele, guitar, *rebana*. Original tonic pitch: D. Instrumental register not matched to vocal registers. Harmonic tempo of 16-chord basic sequence: 12.75 chords per minute. / * In the II chord: B-natural in accompaniment, B-flat in melody.

Oh, Boenga Melati (Krontjong Aseli) [1939]

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 86$
instr.

1st verse*

I rubato *V* *I strict* *voice*

A - ku ka - gum pa - da kau bu - nga me -

V *II* *3* *V* *instr.*

la - ti kar - na ha - rum - mu se - dap dan war - na - mu be - gi - tu pu - tih

IV voice *3* *I* *V*

mm - hm - hm - mm ya ma - kin a - ku a - ba - di [...] tam - bah tam - bah ke - ta - rik a - ku

I *3* *IV* *V* *I* *V*

am pu - nya ji - wa ser - ta ha - ti [...] ke - cil mu - ngil se - gar [...] dan can - tik si - a - pa su - dah li - hat ja - di

2nd verse (start)

I *instr.* *3* *IV* *V* *I* *voice*

ke - pi - ngin bu - at bi - sa pe - tik. Oh me - la - ti etc.

Transcription 6. Sung by Koesbini. From Canary HS 235, issued March 1939. Male singer, 2 violins, flute, guitar, ukulele, cello, string bass, Hawaiian guitar. Original tonic pitch: B-flat. Instrumental register not matched to vocal register. Harmonic tempo of 16-chord basic sequence: 10.75 chords per minute. / * For ease of comparison, the bar in which the first verse starts is here considered bar 5; the rubato introduction thus replaces the first four bars of the basic sequence.

CHAPTER 6

THREE GENRES OF INDONESIAN POPULAR MUSIC: THEIR TRAJECTORIES IN THE COLONIAL ERA AND AFTER

In this chapter I outline the trajectories of three Indonesian musical genres: *kroncong*, *stambul* songs, and *gambang kromong*.¹ Each has had a career extending from the late nineteenth century (or before) into the twenty-first; each was a central genre in mass media before World War II but subsequently slid to the margins of media activity; and each has undergone great shifts in social context and audience composition over the years. I trace how these genres arrived at a point where they could be taken up by mass media, how they fared in the media, and what happened to them after media attention shifted elsewhere.

The chapter contributes three such studies from a part of the world and a historical era whose mediated music is little discussed. I particularly want to draw attention to the *mutability* of these genres, the ways in which they have changed in musical character, social function, and symbolic meaning over time. It will be seen that they experience dramatic changes in social position, particularly class or ethnic affiliation, in the course of their careers.²

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¹ I use "Indonesia" in reference to the post-colonial era (beginning in 1945) or to phenomena (like the archipelago itself) that existed in both the colonial and post-colonial eras. I use "DEI" (for Dutch East Indies) when only the colonial era is under discussion.

² David Brackett has remarked that "the sonic differences between categories . . . are intimately related [to] (if not inextricable from) the discourses that circulate about them" (2002:67). The observation holds for the genres I discuss here. The shifts in affiliation that these genres undergo are accompanied by changes in repertoire and musical practice.

6.1. *Kroncong*

In chapter 5 we saw the path of *kroncong* as it developed from its putative “black Portuguese” origins into the folk music of the lower-class Eurasians of Batavia, and we saw its incorporation into the *stambul* theater, beginning in 1893. I shall maintain in the next section that *stambul* was a popular, not a folk theater, and that *kroncong* therefore began its transition from a folk to a popular music when it was taken into *stambul*. Ten years later it reached a crucial milestone in that transition, when the first commercial recordings of *kroncong* were made. These were two 7” sides, recorded in Singapore in May 1903 by Fred Gaisberg of The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Gaisberg, in the course of his company’s (and his industry’s) first recording expedition to Asia, stopped in Singapore for five days and recorded, among other things, some *stambul* performers from Semarang (a city on the north coast of Java) singing *kroncong*. Two more *kroncong* recordings were made in Batavia by the Beka recording company in January 1906, five more by Odeon in 1907, and many more after that.

Despite its gradually growing presence on records, *kroncong* remained in essence an urban folk music up until World War I. It was, so to speak, open to all: one did not need to be a professional or semi-professional musician or in a professional venue to sing it. The whole genre appears to have used only two chord-structures, one in the major mode and one in the minor. A number of different melodic realizations of these chord structures were possible, but at the rapid tempo of early (pre-1915) *kroncong*, that number was relatively limited. The melodies served as vehicles for improvised or pre-existing verses spontaneously strung together, and even people who could not make them up on the spot (a widespread skill at the

time) held a few verses in memory. Collections of verses were published in book form very soon after *kroncong* entered the *stambul* theater. Their purpose was presumably to equip ordinary people—not just *stambul* actors—with a stock of verses to sing when occasions arose. What listeners enjoyed in *kroncong* was less the music, which was largely the same in all performances, than the verses; the verse forms (called *syair* and *pantun*) and the manner of performance lent themselves to lyrical expression, narrative, satirical comment, and comic repartee between singers.

Although 121 known *kroncong* recordings were issued in the years before World War I, their singers were identified on the record labels simply as “man” or “woman,” not by name; when any identification at all was given, it was the name of the *stambul* troupe the singers belonged to, for *kroncong* throughout this period was still presented as a component of *stambul* music.³ It is noteworthy that in most cases *kroncong* were published on record with the simple title *Krontjong* or *Lago Krontjong* (“*Krontjong* tune”)—the various melodic realizations were not sufficiently distinctive to merit separate titles.⁴

During the hiatus in recording that occurred between during and after World War I, *kroncong* underwent a decisive change—the slowing-down of the tempo described in detail in Chapter Five. Although the chord-structure remained the same, the slower harmonic tempo

³ The spoken announcements that opened many pre-war recordings did not name the singers; instead they gave the title of the piece and the name of the retailer or distributor who had “made” (that is, commissioned or arranged for) the recording.

⁴ Only two distinctions were marked in the pre-war *kroncong* titles. The two basic chord-structures had different names: the one in the minor mode was called *Krontjong Bandan*, and the one in the major mode (which became the more prominent by far) was called either *Krontjong* or *Morisko* (in a number of variant spellings). The difference between *Krontjong* and *Morisko* seems to have been one of tempo rather than melody, with *Morisko* taken a bit slower. After the war, this distinction disappeared: both were taken at the same tempo, and most recordings of *Morisko* in the 1930s were titled *Krontjong Morisko*, making *Morisko* just one item among (by that time) many in the *kroncong* category.

allowed for a flowering of melody, and it also permitted the development, over time, of a distinctive accompaniment idiom featuring interlocking figuration (often called *cak-cuk*) played on small plucked lutes, single-string “walking” guitar, and a pizzicato cello imitating the drumming characteristic of Central Javanese and Sundanese gamelan music.⁵

With the slower tempo, *kroncong* became a more complicated music, both to play and to sing. Melodies acquired distinctive shapes (despite always using the same chord-structure), and these were linked to individual titles and to prescribed lyrics—that is to say, a repertoire of many individual songs developed. *Kroncong* was no longer within the capabilities of just any stroller in the streets, and it is at this point that singers and performing groups began to be named on the record labels. Thus *kroncong* had acquired by the late 1920s all the attributes of a full-blown popular music.⁶

In this period, *kroncong* caught on. From 1925 to 1935, 720 known *kroncong* records were issued, and from 1936 to 1942 another 697. (Compare these figures to the 121 before 1915.) My reading of these statistics is that *kroncong*, by moving out of the streets and becoming a professionalized music, had greatly increased its appeal to the audience that could afford to buy gramophones and records. Many in this consumer pool had been put off by the lower-class, plebeian associations of pre-war folk *kroncong*.

⁵ These various idiomatic features emerged in the inter-war years, but they had not yet coalesced into the *complex* of traits I call the *standard idiom* of *kroncong*. In recordings from the 1920s to the early 1940s, some traits may appear while others do not, but by the 1950s, when recording resumes after the hiatus caused by the Japanese occupation and the Revolution, they all typically appear together.

⁶ Here are some of the most prominent female recording stars of *kroncong* in the interwar years: Miss Riboet (1900-1965), Miss Alang, Miss Tioe, Miss Roekiah, Miss Jacoba, Miss Netty. Along with these there were countless near-misses. (There was also, according to a 1931 advertisement, a Miss Nomer, but she was probably a joke.) Among the male stars were S. Abdullah (d.1941), Leo Spel, Louis Koch, and R. Koesbini (1910-1991) (in my opinion also a composer of particularly inventive and attractive *kroncong* melodies).

After the resumption of recording in 1925, *kroncong* was a bourgeois music, in musical style and lyric content. It was also no longer an adjunct of the *stambul* theater, which was itself undergoing fundamental changes. Nor was it still a localized music tied primarily to Batavia—there were *kroncong* groups in Surabaya, Solo, Bandung, and public *kroncong* competitions (*concours kroncong*) all over. Moreover, it had become ethnically various: whereas before World War I *kroncong* seems to have been mainly the province of Eurasian singers, after the war there were many *pribumi* stars, along with Eurasians and *Peranakan* Chinese.⁷

In the 1930s there were further musical developments. *Kroncong* began to move away from the elements of distinctive idiom that had developed in the 1920s and instead started to apply—still to the same basic chord-structure—the rhythms, instrumentation, and arrangements of Euro-American and Latin American dance music, generating songs described on record labels as *kroncong-foxtrot*, *kroncong-swing*, *kroncong-tango*, *kroncong-rumba*, *kroncong-carioca*, *kroncong-paso doble*. The *kroncong* form itself began to experience modification: though the defining gestures of the chord-structure were retained,⁸ other parts of the structure could be extended, and some chord-substitutions could be introduced. The typical verse form of the lyrics also changed, from the traditional self-contained Malay

⁷ Miss Tioe, Miss Kim Nio, and the comic singer Kwa Toemboe were *peranakan* Chinese. Leo Spel and Louis Koch were Eurasians. Hugo Dumas, the flutist and director of one of the most popular *kroncong* groups, Lief Java, was Eurasian, while the singers and the other instrumentalists were *pribumi*. The most popular male singer of the 1930s was S. Abdullah, of Arab ancestry (*keturunan Arab*). Note, however, that there were no full-blood European performers of *kroncong*. At least officially, there was also no European audience for it: the government-run radio station, NIROM, broadcast two contrasting full-day programs concurrently, sending them out on different frequencies: a “Western Programme” for European listeners and an “Eastern Programme” for Indonesians and other Asians. *Kroncong* was a staple of the Eastern programme but was virtually never broadcast on the Western programme. It is possible, though, that Europeans who wanted to hear NIROM’s *kroncong* broadcasts simply turned their dials to the Eastern programme at the appropriate time. As for Eurasians, they probably chose to listen or not listen to *kroncong* on the basis of which side of their ancestry they identified with more strongly.

⁸ These are: a progression from the dominant to the major supertonic (or secondary dominant) chord and back to the dominant; and, later, a long passage in the subdominant.



Figure 6.1a. Performer-centered marketing: *Who is Miss Alang?* This is the first of four advertisements scattered through issues of the Medan newspaper *Pelita Andalas* over two days. This one and the one on the next page appeared on 23 August 1928.

quatrain called *pantun*, with a defining parallel relation (of rhyme or sense, or both) between the first and second couplets, to ordinary quatrains or to strings of couplets linked in theme but not paired into quatrains.

Furthermore, in the second half of the 1930s a new genre emerged, not following the *kroncong* chord-structure but applying the typical instrumentation and accompaniment idiom of *kroncong* to songs in the 32-bar AABA form of Euro-American popular music, or in other song forms (e.g., AABB) characterized (as *kroncong* was not) by internal repetition.⁹ This genre is

⁹ The famous *Bengawan Solo*, composed by Gesang Martohartono in 1940, is a *langgam kroncong*. That song, in AABA form, is closer to *kroncong asli* than many other *langgam kroncong*, since it includes both a secondary-dominant-to-dominant progression (II [V of V] to V) and a brief visit to the subdominant; but in *Bengawan Solo* these events do not fall where they would in a *kroncong asli*.



Figure 6.1b. *Miss Alang has arrived*. The second of four advertisements scattered through issues of the Medan newspaper *Pelita Andalas* over two days. This one and the one on the previous page appeared on 23 August 1928.

today called *langgam kroncong*,¹⁰ but it is not clear to me when that term began to be used. Neither *langgam kroncong* nor *langgam* alone appears in a title or as a descriptor¹¹ on 78s manufactured before World War II, nor are they found in the radio program guides for 1938; and at least one song that falls analytically into the category of *langgam kroncong*, “Bintang Surabaya,” was labeled in the program guides simply as a *kroncong*.

We can sum up these developments by looking at the changing meanings of the word *kroncong*. Up to about 1935, if one purchased a record labeled *kroncong* or went to a *conours kroncong*, one would expect to hear (apart from the anomalous *Kroncong Bandan*) songs with

¹⁰ *Langgam* alone indicates any sort of melody in a European style and form (typically AABA). In combination with *kroncong*, the term indicates such a melody played in *kroncong* idiom and instrumentation.

¹¹ A *descriptor* is a descriptive indication appearing on a record label, usually in parentheses after the title or apart from the title, above and off to the left or right.



Figure 6.1c. *Miss Alang sings for Odeon records*. The third of four advertisements scattered through issues of the Medan newspaper *Pelita Andalas* over two days. This one and the one on the next page appeared on 25 August 1928.

the chord-structure shown in Figures 5.3 and 5.6 (at fast tempo before 1915; at half that tempo afterwards); texts in the *pantun* verse form; instrumentation featuring violin and guitar and, probably, a small lute, but otherwise variable; and an accompaniment idiom that was also variable but likely would include one or more of the disparate elements that later fused to become the “standard” idiom. Beginning around 1935, this complex of traits came to be seen as the *old* style of *kroncong*, which was then back-designated *kroncong asli* (“true” or “original” *kroncong*), in order to distinguish it from the *new* style, called *kroncong modern*. The “modern” style used the same chord-structure as *kroncong asli*, perhaps with modifications, but tended to use linked couplet texts or ordinary quatrains instead of *pantun*, and Euro-American dance-band instrumentation and idioms. Thus *kroncong* from around 1935 usually signified a *repertoire* (all the compositions using the *kroncong* song form), but one needed to refer to the



Figure 6.1d. *Miss Alang's records can be bought at these stores.* The fourth of four advertisements scattered through issues of the Medan newspaper *Pelita Andalas* over two days. This one and the one on the previous page appeared on 25 August 1928.

modifiers, *asli* and *modern*, to know what instrumentation and performance-style would be heard.¹²

Standard kroncong (1940s-1970s)

The changes introduced by *kroncong modern* and *langgam kroncong* tended in the direction of Euro-American popular music, and I believe if they had continued unchecked the

¹² I am not sure how the songs now known as *langgam kroncong* were classified: *asli* or *modern*? On gramophone records they may not have been put in either category: Canary HS 222, *Bintang Surabaya*, which is analytically a *langgam kroncong*, issued probably in 1940 or after, is characterized on the label simply as a *lagu*, a "song"; its *kroncong* character is not signaled. In the radio program guides, however, broadcasts described as *kroncong*, or performed by ensembles called *orkes kroncong* (*kroncong* orchestras), included many songs with neither "*kroncong*" nor "*stambul*" in their titles. Some of these may have been *langgam kroncong*; others were, I think, simply popular songs, played in dance-band styles. That is to say, *orkes kroncong* were not limited in their repertoire to songs that were formally *kroncong* as in Figure 5.6. On gramophone records, however, if the word *kroncong* appears in the song-title or as a descriptor, the song is almost certain to be in the *kroncong asli* form. This is probably true for the song-titles in radio-guide listings as well, but there's no way to be sure.

kroncong song form would have lost its predominance and become simply the idiosyncratic form of one or two items in the repertoire of Indonesian popular music. But the coming of the Japanese in March 1942 reversed this trend. The occupation government banned the jazz and popular music of enemy nations, putting a stop to the performing and broadcasting of the *kroncong-rumbas*, *kroncong-foxtrots*, etc., that had been ubiquitous in the second half of the 1930s. *Kroncong asli*, however, seen as an indigenous Indonesian genre, was permitted, and it continued to be broadcast, along with *langgam kroncong* and (probably) other *langgam* not performed in the *kroncong* idiom.¹³

The proportions of *kroncong asli* to *langgam kroncong* and, so to speak, ordinary (non-*kroncong*) *langgam* during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) and the subsequent Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949) are not known. There was no commercial recording in this period—another gap in the documentation, like the one from 1914(?)–1925—and I have not seen any radio program guides with playlists.¹⁴ What we see when commercial recording resumes in the early 1950s is that *kroncong asli* and *langgam kroncong* are increasingly fused in a single category, and the *kroncong modern* are extinct. This is the case in the 1953-1954 catalogue of 78s issued on Irama, the label of the Indonesian Music Company Irama Limited, the first company to begin production after Independence. Within the catalogue's *kroncong* category, *kroncong asli* are distinguished by the abbreviation "Kr." in the title (*Kr. Meratap Hati*, *Kr. Mutiara*); the category also includes, without that abbreviation, *stambul*, *jali-jali*, and such

¹³ It is not clear how much leeway the Japanese allowed. "Western music," meaning music in Western idioms, was still broadcast and performed, provided it was by German (non-Jewish) or Japanese composers. I don't know whether music by Italian composers was permitted. For *langgam* not performed in *kroncong* style, a neutral non-jazzy popular idiom may have been permitted.

¹⁴ Program guides were issued for the Occupation radio, Hosokyoku, but so far as I know, none were issued during the Revolution.

songs as *Bengawan Solo*, which would today be called *langgam kroncong*. The *kroncong* idiom and instrumentation that were optional before the war are now pervasive in all songs in the *kroncong* category; they are now the norm, the standard, in relation to which any later deviation (the introduction of instruments other than strings and flute, for instance, or a return to the pre-war dance-band rhythms) would be considered an innovation. There is, however, no longer a standard repertoire; or, more precisely, the repertoire is so broad as to be amorphous, accepting apparently any melody that can be played in the *kroncong* instrumentation and idiom.

The desire of audiences for songs in Euro-American idioms, which had produced the pre-war *kroncong*-tangos and such, did not go away, but it was no longer manifested in adaptations of *kroncong*. In the Irama catalogue there is a new category called “progressive songs” (*lagu-lagu progressive*) consisting of Euro-American-style songs played in cocktail-lounge, non-*kroncong* arrangements. Later in the 1950s this category or style would come to be called “entertainment” (*hiburan*).

From the 1950s into the early 1970s, the national recording company Lokananta (established in 1956 or 1957; I have been unable to fix the date) divided its production into two large categories: *D*, standing for *daerah* (regional), covering all forms of music and theater that were associated with *parts* of the country but not the whole country; and *I*, standing for Indonesia and including *national* genres, considered to be of interest to all Indonesians.¹⁵ *Kroncong* and *hiburan* were both included in the Indonesia grouping. *Kroncong* was further subdivided (according to descriptors on the record labels or album covers) into *kroncong asli*

¹⁵ For a discography of Lokananta’s recordings up to 1985 and a discussion of the company’s practices, see Yampolsky 1987.

and *kroncong baru* (new). Virtually all songs listed in the *kroncong asli* category have *kroncong* in their title (*Kroncong Cendrawasih*, *Kroncong Aku Rela*, etc.), with the exception of a few songs designated *Stambul II*; thus here, as in the Irama catalogue of 1953-1954, if the word *kroncong* or its abbreviation appears in the title, it is almost certain to indicate a *kroncong asli* (Figure 5.6). The *kroncong baru* subcategory includes *langgam kroncong* and a few songs with *kroncong* in their title, which are presumably *asli* in form; I suspect that what made these *asli* songs *baru* lay in their instrumentation or idiom.

Another change was felt in those years soon after the Revolution: *kroncong* became the music of the veterans' generation. It was nostalgic, reminding people of the camaraderie, sacrifice and idealistic struggle of the 1940s; it was loved, but in the way golden oldies are loved.¹⁶ As *kroncong* became identified with the nation and its founding struggle, the tempo of the music—or at least of dignified and patriotic *kroncong asli*—began slowing down again, repeating the process that had occurred around the time of the First World War: some (but not all) of the 78s from the early 1950s had a harmonic tempo of 7-8 chords per minute (as against 13-13.5 after the first slow-down),¹⁷ and by the 1990s nearly all *kroncong asli* moved at this slower tempo, roughly one-quarter that of *kroncong* before World War I. But this increasingly dignified and nostalgic *kroncong* was not young people's music. The current music of the 1950s

¹⁶ On the other hand, no effort seems to have been made to exhume the *kroncong* of the 1920s and 1930s. Very few of the *kroncong asli* singers who recorded in or after the 1950s began their careers before the Japanese occupation. The singer Netty may be an exception—if indeed the Netty recorded by Lokananta singing *kroncong asli* in 1958 and 1959 was the same person as the pre-war *kroncong* singer Miss Netty. Some instrumentalists and singers not tied to *kroncong asli* (e.g., Gesang, 1917–2010) did manage to continue their careers through the war years and into the era of Indonesian independence.

¹⁷ For example, *Kroncong Kenanganku*, Irama IRS 4 (8.125 chords per minute) and *Kroncong Meratap Hati*, Irama IRS 7 (7.625 chords per minute). These are both listed in the 1953-1954 catalogue of the Irama record label (Irama 1953?), but at that time the second slow-down was not yet complete: consider, from the same catalogue, *Kroncong Tjendrawasih*, Irama IRK 171-130 (12 chords per minute) and *Kroncong Swadesi*, Irama IRK 182-141 (11.5 chords per minute).

and the first half of the 1960s was *hiburan*, with its cocktail-lounge idiom, more than *kroncong*. And after 1965 and the fall of Indonesia's first president, Soekarno—who had opposed the influx of Euro-American popular culture—English-language youth music and Indonesian adaptations and imitations of it took over as the music of those years.

One further development in the *kroncong* of the 1950s and 1960s must be mentioned: a genre using the *kroncong* instrumentation and *langgam* song forms emerged that was characterized by scales approximating (within the Western diatonic tuning) the *pelog* and *slendro* scales in Javanese gamelan and by texts sung in Javanese rather than Indonesian. This music was called *langgam Jawa*, and it was, at first, carefully differentiated from *kroncong* despite the identity (or near-identity: sometimes a Javanese drum was added to *langgam Jawa*) of the genres' instrumentation and idiom.¹⁸

Late kroncong (1970s-present)

Since the 1970s, the primary surviving audience for *kroncong*, the veterans' generation, has of course grown ever older, and the distance between the original *kroncong* repertoire and the standard *kroncong* idiom and instrumentation has widened. The terms *kroncong* and *stambul*, if used in a song's title, continue to designate formal structures, but as a *genre*-name *kroncong* can now refer, on the one hand, to *anything* played in standard *kroncong* style—not only *kroncong asli* and *langgam kroncong*, but *pop kroncong*, *dangdut kroncong*, and *kroncong*

¹⁸ A key figure in the development of *langgam Jawa* was the composer and ensemble-leader Andjar Any (1936-2008), who is said to have written 1800 *langgam Jawa* songs. *Langgam Jawa* was not the first attempt to use *kroncong* instruments to accompany singing in Javanese, nor even the first to adapt the *pelog* scale to European instruments. There were string orchestras on the radio in the 1930s that played Central Javanese and Sundanese gamelan pieces; and there was a genre of performance called *kembang kacang*, which seems to have been a precursor of *langgam Jawa* that could be performed as part of a *kroncong* program if the singer could sing in Javanese.

Beatles—and on the other to songs traditionally considered *kroncong* but played in any style whatever. Further, *langgam Jawa* has come to be considered a kind of *kroncong*. Where, before, a *kroncong* compilation would have no *langgam Jawa* and a *langgam Jawa* compilation would have no *kroncong*, now the repertoires may be mixed. (See Figure 5.1 in the previous chapter.)

In the late 1980s and into the mid-1990s, collections of *kroncong* melodies (typically in number notation) were published containing many newly-composed works extolling the heroism of revolutionary fighters and the value of service to the nation (*kepahlawanan*, *pengabdian*), and promoting the Soeharto government's slogans and campaigns. The melodies adhered to the formal rules of *kroncong*, but the stultifying character of the lyrics is evident from the titles alone: *Kroncong Senyuman Pahlawan* (Kr. The Smile of a Hero), *Kroncong Kharisma Pahlawan* (Kr. The Charisma of a Hero), *Kroncong Patriot Indonesia* (Kr. Indonesian Patriot), *Kroncong Terima Kasih Bapak Tani* (Kr. Thank You, Mister Farmer), *Kroncong Sukseskan Sidang Umum Musyawarah Perwakilan Rakyat* (Kr. Make the Meeting of the People's Representatives a Success), *Kroncong Citra Lalu-lintas* (Kr. The Image of Orderly Road Traffic), *Kroncong Himbauan Keluarga Berencana* (Kr. A Call to Practice Family Planning). This is a long way from *kroncong*-tangos of the 1930s, let alone the street *kroncong* and theatrical love duets of the early 1900s.¹⁹

More recently, younger musicians have emerged who regard *kroncong* as so old-fashioned as to make no demands, something they can approach without reverence and can handle as they wish. "Today," say the notes to *Kroncong Tenggara* (*Kroncong* of the

¹⁹ These titles are taken from the five-volume collection *Stambul, kroncong, langgam* (Muchlis 1987–1995). Their precise references, in order of listing in the above paragraph, are: 5.49, 5.48, 4.6, 5.59, 5.10, 5.70, and 3.27.

Southeast), a CD published in Jakarta in 2007 and named for its performing group, “probably the only people who listen to *kroncong* are in search of nostalgia.” The group, which aims to “excavate and renew” *kroncong*, consists of the remarkably accomplished and vocally agile singer Nyak Ina Raseuki, known as Ubiet (who, in addition to all her performing credits, holds a doctorate in ethnomusicology from the University of Wisconsin), two composer-arranger-instrumentalists (Dian HP [=Dian Hadi Pranowo] and Riza Arshad), and a number of other instrumentalists. The CD offers a fragmented, cubist view of *kroncong*. Some classic melodies are there, sort of, but they frequently careen off into new keys, and the harmonies are wildly unpredictable.²⁰ The instrumentation retains the *cak-cuk* interplay (on mandolin and ukulele), but nothing else (except an occasional cello and flute) comes from the standard *kroncong* ensemble: instead one hears two accordions, a saxophone, Sundanese drums, and an electric bass. Three of the eight songs on the CD are—if you listen hard and don’t count the beats—*kroncong asli*. Two of the others are *langgam* played in quasi-*kroncong* style. The remaining three are new compositions, one of which claims in its title to be a *kroncong* but is not (if *kroncong* in the title still designates the *kroncong asli* form).

My point is not to criticize *Kroncong Tenggara*’s delightfully fresh CD, but rather to show how far *kroncong* has moved in the 130 years of its documented existence. Its trajectory took it from a lower-class urban folk music, associated with Batavia, to a professionalized and mediatized popular music appealing to consumer-class audiences throughout Java and probably

²⁰ Two of the titles on Ubiet’s CD (Ubiet 2007) are also on Smithsonian Folkways’ *Music of Indonesia, vol. 2* (Yampolsky 1991a). To get a sense of the playful iconoclasm of Ubiet’s approach, listen to *Kroncong Kemayoran* and *Kroncong Sapu Lidi* played straight on the Smithsonian CD and then to Riza Arshad’s delirious arrangements of them on *Kroncong Tenggara*. Another version of *Kroncong Kemayoran*, again with Ubiet but not quite so goofy, is on Youtube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUcmOLBBves>. There Ubiet sings with the Australian ensemble Topology, who made the arrangement.



Figure 6.2. CD cover for *Kroncong Tenggara* (2007), featuring Ubiet (Nyak Ina Raseuki) and the group Kroncong Tenggara. Four out of eight tracks are identified as *kroncong*. The instruments shown in the framed photograph at the lower right are: two accordions, electric guitar, saxophone, Sundanese drum; also heard on the album are cello, mandolin, ukulele, and flute.

in most large cities across Indonesia; from that stage it passed on to become the music of a generation, the one that suffered in the Japanese Occupation, fought in the Revolution, and later nostalgically recalled the era of its youth; and in the New Order, dominated by members of that same generation, it became a tool for inculcating veneration for their own heroism.

But as that generation has aged, its music has receded farther and farther from younger people. *Kroncong* for the youth of today (2012) is a relic, of interest as an object for either transitory appreciation or parody—or total makeover, as with Ubiet’s CD—but not what any

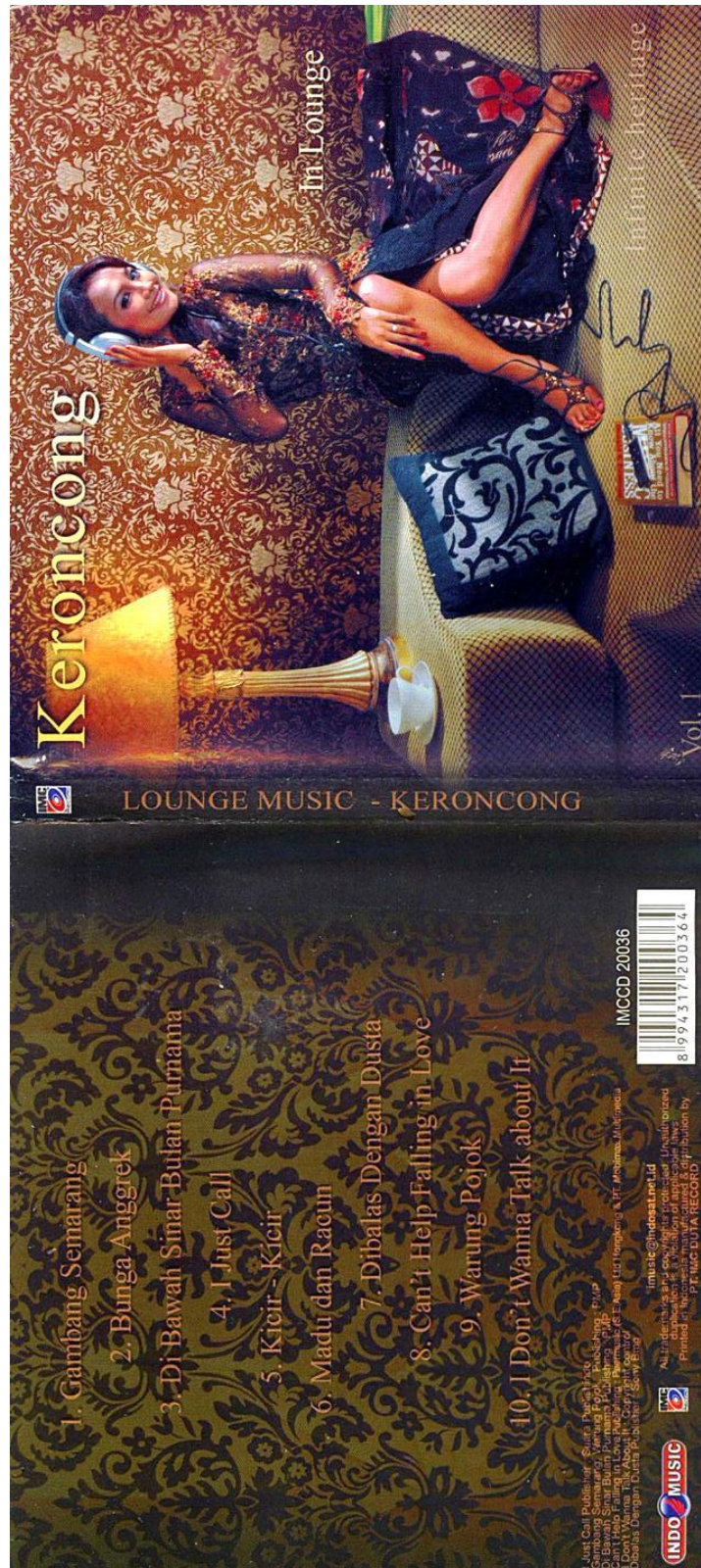


Figure 6.3. Kroncong as idiom, not repertoire. *Keroncong in Lounge, vol. 1: Infinite Heritage* (undated CD; purchased in Jakarta, 2012). None of the tracks is identified as a *kroncong*; three are sung in English.

young people would call their *own* music. Memory of the genre's development has been lost: no one would think of playing *kroncong* at the old fast tempo,²¹ or in the simple accompaniment style before *cak-cuk* figuration and the cello-drum developed; nor are most people now able to put together a spontaneous string of *pantun* verses; and the distinctions between formerly discrete categories are now blurred.²² What survives of the old repertoire is a handful of token songs (*Kroncong Morisko*, *Kroncong Kemayoran*, *Kroncong Sapu Lidi*, a few others) and some newer songs, typically patriotic (e.g., *Kroncong Segenggam Harapan* on Yampolsky 1991a), composed in *kroncong asli* form after the Revolution for the generation of veterans who still loved the old style.

6.2. *Stambul*

The origins of the *stambul* theater appear to be in the Indian theater troupes (*wayang Parsi*) that visited British Malaya, the Straits Settlements, and the DEI in the 1880s or before, performing in Hindi or other Indian languages. The songs of *wayang Parsi*, originally accompanied by tabla and harmonium,²³ became popular locally and were outfitted with Malay words, and entrepreneurs formed local theater troupes to present Malay-language plays with

²¹ Except for *Kroncong Kemayoran*, the one *kroncong asli* that withstood the slowdowns after World War I and after the Revolution.

²² Consider another recent CD, *Keroncong in Lounge: Infinite Heritage* (Indo Music IMCCD 20036). All songs are sung by a young woman named Safitri. Not one is a *kroncong asli*, but two (*Bunga Anggrek* and *Di Bawah Sinar Bulan Purnama*) are *langgam* from the 1940s/50s and have long been part of the repertoire of *kroncong* groups. The rest are miscellaneous Indonesian and European/American songs from the "infinite heritage" oldies bin (Stevie Wonder, Elvis, *Madu dan Racun*, *Gambang Semarang*). All are performed in a smooth, piano-led cocktail-lounge style (as the title suggests), with unobtrusive percussion and some *kroncong* markers: walking guitar and *cak-cuk* (reduced to one instrument playing both parts). *Keroncong* in the title designates not a repertoire but a calm, nostalgic mood and some gestures in the arrangement. A salesperson in the CD store explained to me that "lounge" is like "bossa," not like *pop*. The *Keroncong in Lounge* series has now reached four volumes, the fourth of which includes songs by the Beatles, Willie Nelson, and The Platters, with no Indonesian-language songs at all.

²³ Ahmad [1962?]:49-52. Another Indian drum, *dhol*, has also been reported (*ibid.*, 61-64).

music, modeled on the *wayang Parsi*. The resultant form of theater, existing in several variants, became a highly successful commercial entertainment in the years up to World War I, and remained so (with important modifications) all the way through to the end of World War II. In Malaya and the Straits Settlements, the theater was called *komedi, opera, or bangsawan*, or a combination of those terms (e.g., Komedi Opera Poeri Indra Bangsawan); in the DEI it was called by those same terms plus *stamboel*, again occurring in various combinations (e.g., Komidie Stamboel The Moeria Opera of Java). Today, in the literature about these theaters, they are most commonly known as *bangsawan* and *stambul*. Both became obsolete as commercial entertainments after World War II, though the Malaysian government has tried to reconstruct a purified form of *bangsawan*.²⁴

While early *bangsawan* plays featured stories from Malay history and legend, Malay music, and courtly Malay language, as time went on this emphasis decreased, and there was less and less difference between *bangsawan* and *stambul*: both drew on the Arabian Nights, Shakespeare, European folk tales and fairy tales (Snow White, Sleeping Beauty), and Hindu, Arabic, Chinese, Malay, and Javanese stories and legends. Musically also, the theaters were wildly eclectic, providing Indian music for Indian stories, Malay music for Malay stories, and inserting European popular tunes and newly composed European-style melodies anywhere. In between scenes and acts there were “extra turns” that could feature anything—cakewalks, other dances, comedy acts, popular songs.

²⁴ Several scholars have written in rich detail about these theater forms. For *wayang Parsi* and the Southeast Asian adaptations of it before 1900, see Camoens 1982 and Cohen 2001 and 2002. For *bangsawan* in the twentieth century, including the reconstructed version of the 1980s, see Tan 1993. For the early years of *stambul* in the DEI, see Cohen 2002 and 2006.

In this chapter I am concerned only with the *stambul* theater, not *bangsawan*. The first *stambul* troupe in the DEI, formed in Surabaya in 1891, called itself Komedi Stamboel. The company's director, Auguste Mahieu (1865-1903), is said to have composed the music for the fledgling company (Cohen 2006:59), but a 1903 report by Otto Knaap mentions that, in addition to Mahieu's melodies, popular tunes (*populaire deuntjes*) were played between scenes.²⁵ Knaap says further that when Mahieu started the company his orchestra consisted of violin, guitar, and flute, but another report says the instruments were violin, guitar, and tambourine; Manusama, recalling in 1922 performances by Mahieu's company "twenty-eight years ago" (i.e., 1894, if his dating is reliable), says the orchestra at that time had a "French" instrumentation: piano, three violins, flute, clarinet, cornet, trombone, double bass.²⁶ The tunes he remembers include two of what may be termed the "numbered *stambul*" (more on these in a moment), a "Spanish waltz," a "polka-mazurka," a Dutch patriotic song (*Wiens Neerlands Bloed*), a "well-known school song, *Langs berg en dal*," and the *Donauwellen* waltz. The words to these (except presumably those for the patriotic song and the school song) were all in Malay and used Malay verse forms (*pantun* and probably *syair*). Justus van Maurik, in a

²⁵ Knaap (1971[1903]). Knaap's article is presumably Cohen's source for the statement that Mahieu composed the original music for the *stambul* theater. Knaap says Mahieu refused to follow the common practice in Dutch theater of writing verses to be "sung to the tune of" some well-known song. Instead he equipped his company with a repertoire by composing six new tunes on Portuguese models—that is, he reworked old songs known to the "descendants of Portuguese in the Indies," but made them gentler and sweeter. It is not clear from Knaap whether these six were among the "numbered *stambul*" discussed below. I am doubtful that Mahieu's models were truly Portuguese songs, and am certain that even if they came from the "black Portuguese" community—was there one in Surabaya, where Mahieu created his *stambul* melodies?—they were not *kroncong*. I point this out because readers entranced by the legend that *kroncong* is "Portuguese music" may assume that if Mahieu's models were Portuguese they must have been *kroncong*. Had they been *kroncong*, Mahieu would not have needed to hire *kroncong* singers when his troupe came to Batavia in 1892.

²⁶ Knaap 1971[1903]:7; Cohen 2006: 51; Manusama 1922:3,14-15. Other instrumentations have also been reported. An observer in 1892 noted two violins, trumpet, flute, and guitar. A harp was added sometime in 1892, and a piano in 1893, perhaps replacing the harp. (These instrumentations come from Cohen 2006: 99-100,124,126-27,138.) Maurik (1897:126) describes, rather implausibly, a violin and a *rebab* (!), in the wings on opposite sides of the stage.

memoir published in 1897, says he heard the English music-hall tunes *Daisy Bell* (this is the famous song, introduced in 1892, with the bicycle built for two) and *Champagne Charlie* (1867) in a performance by the Komedi Indra Bangsawan, presumably in Batavia; the play was, he says, an “imitation” of Boieldieu’s 1825 comic opera *La Dame Blanche*.²⁷

Joining this eclectic mix in 1892 was Batavia’s urban folk music, *kroncong*. Cohen reports that Manusama heard *kroncong* when the Komedi Stamboel made its first visit to Batavia in September of that year, and by December he had hired three *kroncong* singers to join his troupe. According to the source I cited earlier (Tzu 1939:10), *kroncong* was used for love duets, and it may also have been heard in the “extra turn” entr’actes.

If *kroncong* was at that stage still a folk music, was *stambul* a folk theater? This is, as usual, a matter of definition. It is widely accepted that a crucial feature of popular music is dissemination through mass media. If by mass media we understand only *electronic* media (recordings, radio, television, etc.), then no music before the advent of recording can be considered popular.²⁸ I, however, would wish to include nineteenth-century music-hall and parlor songs in the popular category, and one can do this if one accepts sheet music as a mass medium. But what about theater? The *stambul* theater in the 1890s had every feature typical of popular art *except* media dissemination—and if we count print media it had media dissemination too (in newspaper advertisements and in cheap collections of *stambul* plots and song lyrics). Even without print media, *stambul* had the orientations I listed earlier (urban, commercial, and entertainment emphases, etc.), star performers, and a constant need for

²⁷ Maurik 1897:124-127.

²⁸ Peter Manuel (1988:3) writes: “The realm of musics which are diffused primarily through the mass media is distinctive and substantial enough that we may well wish to exclude from our definition of popular music those related genres . . . which predated these media, regarding them as urban folk musics or, if need be, in a category of their own.”

novelty (new stories, songs, performers, scenery, costumes). (Theater companies tended to perform a different play, or different episodes of a long story, every night.) *Stambul* was a popular theater, in my terms, and *kroncong*, when it entered the repertoire of *stambul* music, was launched as a popular music, although, as I have said, it retained features of an urban folk music until World War I. The *stambul* songs themselves were ambiguous in the same way, associated with a popular theater and its star actors but rapidly entering into the common repertoire of its audience.²⁹

An identifying feature of early *stambul* theater was that the actors sang from time to time during their scenes. Using improvised or stock verses, they described their circumstances or their emotions at that point in the play.³⁰ Their melodies may sometimes have been the miscellaneous popular tunes mentioned by Manusama and van Maurik, but they also sang to a group of melodies with numbers instead of titles.³¹ Manusama in his 1922 account recalls hearing the “*stamboel-melodie* (No. 2)” sung by the company’s prima donna, playing a nymph, and the “*Stamboel-mopje* [ditty] (No. 1)” sung by an actor playing a prince.³² These two, *Stambul I* and *Stambul II*, are by far the best-known and most recorded, but the numbered

²⁹ Consider this comment sent in to a Batavia newspaper and printed in February 1893: “In the short time since the Komedi Stamboel was here [September 1892], all of Batavia is now performing the songs of Komedi Stamboel. . . . Whenever Chinese, Muslims, and especially Europeans or Indos wish to sing or whistle, it is a *stambul* song they do” (Cohen 2006:161; his translation).

³⁰ It is surprising how few accounts of the *stambul* theater remark explicitly on this feature. Manusama himself does not say flat out that the actors presented themselves in song or sang passages of dialogue, but the lyrics he quotes (1922:19-22) make it clear that that is what is happening: “I am the prince of Nura-nuri / I am very troubled / How can I fight Darsa Alam / Who is so powerful?” “Darsa Alam, king of the world / What do you seek here? / Here is your ring / Which I have brought to you.” Other writers tend to mention this feature only in passing, in contrasting the old kind of *stambul* theater with newer developments of the 1920s and after. Abdulkadir and Rosdy (1963:160-161), for example, remark of Miss Riboet’s Orion troupe, founded 1925, that it was “much more modern than Opera/*Stambul* in the old days, when each actor sang all through the play” (*yang maseh di-bawa oleh tiap2 pelakun dengan nyanyian di-seluruh cerita-nya*). Cf. also Ahmad [1962?]:70 and Asmara 1958 (quoted in footnote 40 here).

³¹ These may have included the six tunes Knaap said were composed by Mahieu on Portuguese models.

³² Manusama 1922:20-21.

stambul on records go up to *Stambul XII*. There is no definitive explanation of their role. One possibility is that the melodies were felt to suit specific moods or situations in the plays: one melody would be played for love scenes, another for scenes of sadness, and so forth.³³

Manusama, on the other hand, says the melodies were stock tunes, from which the music director would choose the melody best suited to the vocal range of the actor about to sing. According to Manusama, one actor might sing only one melody throughout a performance—every time he or she came out, the orchestra would strike up that actor’s tune (1922:12).

There is confusion as well regarding what melodies or chord-structures the numbers actually designated. What is now, over a century later, recognized as the chord-structure of *stambul II* melodies—*Stambul II*, along with the much less common *Stambul I*, being the only numbered *stambul* still alive—is a sequence of sixteen evenly spaced chords (Figure 6.4). In performance the sequence can probably begin in any of those chords, though vocals tend to start in the lead-in to either the IV or the V, and the song will always end on the tonic. This is

I I I I IV IV IV IV I I I I V V V V

Figure 6.4. Chord structure of *Stambul II* melodies. †

† The same alterations noted for *kroncong asli* in the footnote to Figure 5.6 apply to this *stambul* chord-structure.

³³ This interpretation is supported by Kusbini’s instruction (1972:31) that *Stambul II* should be played “*andante con dolorosa*” and should express feelings of longing and sadness (*harus mengungkapkan sifat rindu, sedih*).

actually an expansion—a doubling—of the structure one hears in recordings of *stambul II* made before World War I, where each chord is played only twice. (The *stambul II* chord-structure underwent the same slowing down and compensatory doubling we saw with the *kroncong asli* structure.)³⁴ But in the 1920s some recordings designated *stamboel II* have a different chord-structure, as do two published notations from the 1920s.³⁵ Similarly, two recordings titled *Stamboel III*, one made in Batavia in 1906 and the other in Singapore in 1907, present different melodies under the one title.³⁶ The same sort of disagreement is found in regard to *stambul I*: Amir Pasaribu, writing in the early 1950s, says that *stambul I* is the melody also known as *Terang Bulan* (now the national anthem of Malaysia), and some early recordings bear him out;³⁷ Bronia Kornhauser, on the other hand, was told (as was I in the field) that *stambul I* is the same as the melody now known as *Stambul Jampang*—which is *not* the *Terang Bulan* melody: in fact it has the same chord-structure as today’s *stambul II*, but it is always taken at a faster tempo and usually has a distinctive instrumental melody played between the vocal phrases.³⁸

³⁴ *Stambul II* on records before World War I was an eight-chord structure (Figure 6.4, but with each chord played twice instead of four times). I do not have for *stambul* the quantities of data I have for *kroncong*, but the harmonic tempo seems to have followed exactly the same path in both, halving in the 1920s, and nearly halving again in the post-Independence, *gambang kromong* context (described in the next section).

³⁵ Laan Waïlan [1929?] and K.A. van der Poll [n.d.]. In contrast, the chord-structure of Kusbini’s notation (1960:66), which he says he wrote down in 1935, matches Figure 6.4.

³⁶ Odeon 91074 (Batavia), Odeon 90368 (Singapore).

³⁷ Bintang Sapoe 27595, *Eerste Stamboel*; also, I think, Homocord 35294 (though there is a labeling problem with this disc that renders identification arguable). Pasaribu’s statement is found in Pasaribu 1955:53 (reprinted in Pasaribu 1986:59).

³⁸ Kornhauser’s statement occurs in Kornhauser 1978:156. A recorded example not hard to find in Indonesia is *Stambul I Baju Merah*, published on the Lokananta cassette *Old favourites, vol. 1* (ACI 010; the track was recorded in 1967 and was first issued on the LP *Orkes Krontjong Tjendrawasih: Krontjong Asli*, Lokananta LP ARI 125). This has the melody I know as *Stambul Jampang*. The fact that the *Stambul Jampang* class of *stambul I* melodies has the same structure as *stambul II* but is today played twice as fast makes it intriguingly analogous to *Kroncong Kemayoran* after World War I. After that war, *Kroncong Kemayoran* was the only *kroncong* still played at the fast pre-war harmonic tempo. With the second slow-down, after Independence, *Kroncong Kemayoran*, which remains at its original tempo, is now four times faster than most *kroncong*. Cf. *Music of Indonesia 2* (Yampolsky 1991a): the 16 chords (Figure 5.3) of *Kroncong Kemayoran* (track 13) move at 27 chords per minute, while the 16 chords of *Kroncong Segenggam Harapan* (track 8; Figure 5.6b) move at 6.65 chords per minute.

Nevertheless, today, when most of the numbered *stambul* have dropped off the map, there is agreement in practice about the two that survive: *stambul II* melodies have the structure I show in Figure 6.4, and the much less frequently heard *Stambul I* is now usually *Stambul Jampang*.

The term *stambul* has different functions, depending on whether it appears as part of a song's title or as a descriptor. When it appears in a title, it indicates that the song is *a stambul*, i.e., it has one of the structures specific to the music of the *stambul* theater. As a descriptor, however, *stambul* is used for anything that could be sung in a performance of *stambul* theater, which, as we have seen, could be anything in *stambul*'s extremely miscellaneous musical repertoire—except *kroncong*, which after World War I is its own genre, no longer classified as *stambul* music, though it was certainly still included in performances of *stambul* theater.³⁹



Figure 6.5. *Lagoe Gamboes Tambring*, recorded ca. 1927. “Stamboel” to the upper right of the title is a descriptor; the song is not structurally a *stambul*.

³⁹ As a descriptor, *stambul* is not limited to music that is formally a *stambul*, whereas in this interwar period *kroncong* as a descriptor is limited to *kroncong asli* (or *Kroncong Bandan*). See, e.g., Figure 6.5.

In summary, after World War I, while the *kroncong asli* song form becomes a genre, with hundreds of distinct melodies, many with fixed sets of verses, *stambul* becomes on the one hand a category, with no formal unity—it includes, for example, Malay-language versions of *Yes We Have No Bananas* and *If You Knew Susie Like I Know Susie*—and, on the other, it becomes a genre, a repertoire of melodies or structures (signaled by the word *stambul* in the title), but drastically reduced. It has shrunk from the twelve numbered *stambul* down to two: *stambul I* and *stambul II*. As I have shown, it is unclear which formal structure is designated by the name *stambul I*—*Terang Bulan* or *Stambul Jampang*?—but increasingly through the 1920s and 1930s and decisively thereafter there is only one *stambul II* structure (Figure 6.4). There are, however, many different *stambul II* melodies, for, as with *kroncong*, the slowing-down of the harmonic tempo has led to melodic differentiation and the emergence of fixed titles for particular melodies and fixed lyrics attached to them.

The *stambul* theater itself declined in popularity after World War I—or, to put this another way, theater companies that formerly would have used the stories and conventions of the *stambul* theater began in the 1920s to adopt newer styles, in particular modern stories based in the DEI, with more realistic acting, and without sung statements of the characters' situation or emotions. "*Stambul*" was now an old-fashioned name for a theater company: the most prominent troupes in the late 1920s and the 1930s preferred variations on *opera*. (Het Maleisch Operette Gezelschap Orion and Opera Dardanella were the great rival troupes of the time.) *Stambul* remained, however, the umbrella term for the vast category of music that could be heard in an *opera* performance; it was roughly the equivalent of "show tunes" in American music (which can range from Borodin to Irving Berlin to Bernstein). This music was now,

however, restricted to the entr'actes and to "cabaret" performances before or after the play. In his memoirs, the playwright and actor Andjar Asmara, one of the artistic leaders of Opera Dardanella (who preferred *toneel*, the Dutch word for theater, to *opera* as the name for his genre), prided himself on helping to get music out of the scenes of the play itself: "I joined the struggle to eliminate the old practice of singing as in [European] opera."⁴⁰ The numbered *stambul* were now unnecessary, since actors no longer needed a stock of melodies for expressing themselves in song.

Recall that in the period before World War I *kroncong* was one element of *stambul* music, and the performers on *kroncong* recordings were *stambul* musicians. After the war, and particularly in the 1930s, the positions were reversed: the music formally designated *stambul* (*stambul I* and *stambul II* only) became a sub-repertoire of *kroncong*. For example, the song *Kekasihko* (issued ca. 1940), formally a *stambul II* but not designated as such, is played with the *kroncong* accompaniment idiom.⁴¹ Radio program guides in the late 1930s still made the distinction—describing, for example, Koesbini's broadcasts from Surabaya as featuring "original [*origineel* (=asli)] and modern *kroncong* and *stambul*"—but the performers were no longer tied to the theater, and their repertoire was dominated not by *stambul* songs (in the formal sense) but by *kroncong*, or by popular songs in general.

After World War II, *stambul* recedes still further. In the Irama catalogue of 1953/54, there is only one song with "*stambul*" in the title, *Stambul II Bunga Mawar*, and this is classified

⁴⁰ "Saja ikut memperkokoh barisan perjuangannya untuk memberantas tjara lama, dengan menghilangkan njanjian tjara opera dan menegakkan tooneel jang memelopori persandiwaranaan sekarang" (Asmara 1958).

⁴¹ Canary HS 133. The singer is R. Koesbini.

as a *kroncong*.⁴² On Lokananta LPs and cassettes from the 1950s-1970s, *stambul* are performed by *kroncong* ensembles, and typically the ratio of *kroncong* to *stambul* is 4:1 or 5:1—sometimes (on cassettes) 10:1. In the five-volume song collection titled *Stambul, kroncong, langgam* (Muchlis 1987-95), there are 27 *stambul* versus 291 *kroncong* (and 357 *langgam*).

Thus by the post-war era the trajectories of *stambul* and *kroncong* have taken them in opposite directions: *stambul* has moved from a broad category to a subrepertoire of *kroncong*, while *kroncong* has moved from a subrepertoire of *stambul* music to a style of accompaniment that can be played for any song. And the actual *kroncong* repertoire can now be played in other styles: witness a “celebration” of *Bengawan Solo* that presents the one song in fourteen different arrangements, among them “pop country,” “disco reggae”, rock, Sundanese *degung*, “Mandarin cha cha,” and “children pop.”⁴³

There is, however, more to the *stambul* story than this. Aside from its place within the repertoire of *kroncong*, *stambul* has become, in the post-war years, a staple of the repertoire of another genre altogether: *gambang kromong*.

6.3. *Gambang kromong*

Gambang kromong is today commonly associated with the Betawi, the ethnic group that coalesced in the second half of the nineteenth century, incorporating many of the *pribumi* of various ethnicities whose families had lived so long in Jakarta (formerly Batavia, =Betawi) that

⁴² There may be other songs that have *stambul II* structure but are not designated *stambul* in their titles. Ismail Marzuki’s *Terkenang Tanah Air* is one such for sure. Still, the fact that the designation itself drops away is an indication of the weakening of the term’s classificatory importance. Or it may be that the association of *stambul II* with the *stambul* theater and with emotions of love and longing (viz. Kusbini in footnote 33 here) made it seem undignified to use it to designate Ismail Marzuki’s song about longing for Indonesia

⁴³ *The colourful of Bengawan Solo [sic]*, compact disc, Pertiwi CMNP 367, 2005.

their primary geographical loyalty was to that city rather than to their ancestral homelands.⁴⁴

Most people know *gambang kromong* as a Betawi-flavored popular music pioneered in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Benyamin S., who remains, nearly twenty years after his death, the dominant figure in the genre. There is, however, another kind of *gambang kromong*, with a much longer history.⁴⁵ This form of the genre was widespread before World War II among the *peranakan* Chinese of Batavia, and it still survives, in an attenuated form, among the lower-class *peranakan* on the outskirts of Jakarta.

From *orkes gambang* to *gambang kromong* (?1700-1900)

According to Phoa Kian Sioe (1949), *gambang kromong* originates in an earlier ensemble that he calls an *orkes gambang* (*gambang* orchestra or ensemble). This, he says, was created in the 1700s by immigrant Chinese in Batavia. Certain Chinese instruments had been brought from Fujian (the homeland of the Hokkien-speakers who came to the DEI in the early years) or could be made locally: two-stringed fiddles of the *hu* type, where the bow passes between the strings, the three-stringed plucked lute (called *sanxian* in China, *sambian* by Phoa), a transverse

⁴⁴ Castles 1967:155-162. Since “Betawi” is considered a *pribumi* ethnicity, it by definition does not include the *peranakan* Chinese. Betawi language and culture nevertheless contain a strong *peranakan* component.

⁴⁵ Very little has been written about the history of *gambang kromong*. The one detailed source I have seen is an article from 1949 by Phoa Kian Sioe, a member of a distinguished *Peranakan* family in Batavia (by that time Jakarta). Phoa states that he traveled all around Jakarta and the surrounding regions of Tangerang and Bekasi, interviewing elderly musicians and collecting information that they themselves had learned from their elders. The account he presents is detailed and plausible, and it fits well with the scraps of information that appear elsewhere. However, since it is my only source for the history of *gambang kromong* (before the genre surfaces on gramophone records and in newspaper articles and advertisements), I have to depend on it without external corroboration. My presentation is not a translation of Phoa’s account, but more an extrapolation from it, with some of the lacunae filled in to account for details he does not deal with. For example, Phoa does not say how Betawi songs entered the repertoire; perhaps he does not distinguish between Sundanese and Betawi music, though they differ in the language of their texts. In light of the later refashioning of *gambang kromong* as an explicitly Betawi (rather than Chinese) music, it is useful to show how the link to Betawi could originally have been forged. The account I present here is a combination of Phoa’s reconstruction on the basis of what his informants told him, which he admits is unverifiable, and mine on the basis of what I can add to Phoa, either from factual knowledge or as reconstruction (again unverifiable) to account for details Phoa omits. Where my account takes over from Phoa’s is at the beginning of the gramophone era (1903 for the DEI).

flute, and some small percussion (*pan, ningnong*). These instruments were combined with the *gambang*, a xylophone common in Javanese and Sundanese gamelan but here tuned to a Chinese scale. (The *gambang*, Phoa says, was introduced as a substitute for the expensive and hard-to-make Chinese struck zither *yang qin*, known as *yang kim* in Indonesia.)⁴⁶ *Orkes gambang* were already well-established in Batavia by 1743, when five of them played at a big celebration in the Chinese community.

The music that became the repertoire of the *orkes gambang* was a combination of instrumental pieces called *pobin* and *lopan*,⁴⁷ almost all with Chinese titles, and pieces in which the ensemble accompanied singers. These songs had, for the most part, Malay-language titles and verses, and they probably entered the repertoire later than the *pobin*. There was also a third repertoire, music for *wayang sin pe*, a form of theater using child actors, with Chinese stories and with singing and dialogue in Chinese. The music for *wayang sin pe* was apparently quite distinct from the other repertoires; the titles Phoa lists for *wayang sin pe*, all in Chinese, have no overlap with those he lists as *pobin*.⁴⁸

Phoa Kian Sioe says the Malay-language songs were intended to show off the female singers' voices and charms. The singers, termed *cokek*, were young and pretty Indonesian

⁴⁶ This part of the story is questionable, since the *yang qin* is apparently more typical of the Guangdong region than of Fujian.

⁴⁷ Both types of instrumental piece are often lumped together under the term *pobin*, and I shall adopt this usage outside this footnote. I am not sure whether there is an analytical difference between the two, or only a functional one. The *gambang kromong* musicians I recorded in 1990 used *pobin* to refer to an instrumental piece played on its own or as a prelude to a piece with vocal (i.e., a *lagu lama* or *lagu dalem*—see below), and *lopan* for an instrumental piece played as a postlude to a piece with vocal. I never heard a piece called *lopan* played on its own, nor played as the postlude to a vocal piece that had no *pobin* prelude.

⁴⁸ An exception to this discreteness—not mentioned by Phoa Kian Sioe, but turning up in the discographical entries—is the title *Tang Hoa Ko*, which appears in the titles of records (before World War I) both as a *lagu* for *gambang kromong* with vocal, and as a *lagu sin pe*.

(*pribumi*) women, chosen as much for their attractiveness as for their musical ability.⁴⁹ New *cokek* were given Chinese flower-names and housed in a sort of dormitory attached to a Chinese temple; they were supervised by retired *cokek* who trained them in singing with *orkes gambang* and in the other skills they needed.⁵⁰ The most successful *cokek* became the pampered concubines of rich *peranakan* men. Others might be hired out for parties and festivals; and for occasions when all the *cokek* of a temple were needed, even the private flowers of the rich men could be called upon to take part.

As time went on, the rich men competed with each other to treat their *cokek* more and more lavishly—giving them jewels and carriages with teams of horses, building them villas with swimming pools—and thus shaming younger men who could not afford such displays. At some point in the latter part of the nineteenth century, four sons of wealthy *peranakan* thought of a new system: they established *suhian* (brothels) in Batavia, which they could visit in order to enjoy, among other pleasures, the music of *orkes gambang* and the singing of *cokek*.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Mona Lohanda has suggested to me (p.c.) that some of the women may have been slaves. There were also male singers, chosen for their ability to sing and play instruments in the ensemble, and also for their skill in clowning and making jokes.

⁵⁰ Although they had presumably been at least casually raised in Islam, as *cokek* they were expected to pray to the god of the temple. Their prayers were accompanied by offerings of chickens, ducks, and crabs, from which all the blood and innards had been removed, with the idea that like the offerings (a) the *cokek* would not have *isi perut*, “something in the belly” (i.e., become pregnant), and (b) their Chinese patrons would lose their minds over them.

⁵¹ In my album commentary (1991b) I was too delicate about these *suhian*, writing that they were “commercial venues, probably taverns of a sort.” Well yes, of a sort: according to the newer dictionaries they were brothels. But this obscures a nuance. The villas the rich men built for their *cokek* were also called *suhian*; in that context they should be translated as “pleasure houses.” Nevertheless, by the time we get to the next generation, the four sons and their new system, *suhian* are brothels, and no doubt also venues for drinking and smoking opium. It seems likely there was also gambling, though legally “no alcohol, opium or dancing girls were permitted” on premises where there was gambling (Diehl 1993:222); one doesn’t know how strictly this was enforced. While I’m at it, I should also confess another mistake in the 1991b commentary: I used feminine pronouns for Phoa Kian Sioe, who I now know was male. How I made this mistake may be instructive: in Phoa’s article there is a phrase “saja soeda poeteri Djakarta,” which in modern spelling would seem to be “saya sudah puteri Jakarta,” meaning “I am already a daughter [this can be spelled either *puteri* or *putri*] of Jakarta.” The “already” is peculiar, but in interpreting the phrase I passed over it. A decade later I realized that “poeteri” was a non-standard spelling of an unusual inflected form of *putar*, “turn around,” and was used in the now-rare sense of “travel around.” Phoa—no

The repertoire was still Chinese-titled instrumental *pobin*, Malay-language songs without dancing, and music for *wayang sin pe*;⁵² and the instrumentation was still Chinese lutes and flutes, small percussion, and the *gambang* incorporated from Javanese or Sundanese gamelan. The *cokek* may have done some dancing on their own, but men did not yet, Phoa says, come forward to dance with them, as they do now.

Around 1880, the *wijkmeester* (Dutch-appointed administrative head of an urban district or *wijk*) of one of the Chinese districts in Batavia, a man named Bek Teng Tjoe (*Bek* being a title, the local pronunciation of *wijk*), presented at a *suhian* an *orkes gambang* that had been expanded to include Sundanese instruments in addition to the *gambang*: a ten-kettle gong-chime called *kromong*, the set of two or three drums characteristic of Sundanese gamelan music, and two hanging gongs, one middle-sized and one larger. Bek Teng Tjoe's innovation caught on, and this is the moment when the *orkes gambang* became *gambang kromong*.

The new instruments brought the composition of the ensemble close to that of a Sundanese gamelan of the sort used for the *ronggeng* or *tandak* performances, where male spectators or guests at a wedding or domestic celebration came forward to dance (*ngibing*)

putri Jakarta he—was saying, “I have already gone all around Jakarta” to find information about *gambang kromong*. A writer today would be more likely to say *kelilingi*.

⁵² There may have been yet another repertoire, of pieces with Chinese titles and Chinese, or possibly Malay, texts, which the *cokek*, wearing Chinese costumes, sang while dancing solo or together, but still without male partners. Such songs—*Si Pat Mo*, *Poa Si Li Tan*, and *Kia Lee* are three of the titles—were definitely part of the twentieth-century repertoire before World War II, and it seems likely that they were already present in the days of the *orkes gambang*. *Poa Si Li Tan* has been reported as having a Chinese text, but a version in Malay *syair* verses was published in 1921 (*Sair Tjerita Si Lie Tan*; see Salmon 1981:384). An elderly *peranakan* singer whom I recorded in 1990, Ncim Masnah, owned a printed text of *Poa Si Li Tan*, likely this one from 1921 (I could not be sure, as the title page was missing). She had memorized a portion of it, which she often sang with *gambang kromong*, not at weddings but at temple anniversaries and annual celebrations (Yampolsky 1991b, track 4). She also knew the dance that went with the song.

with the female dancers (or singer-dancers) of the group.⁵³ With drums and gongs, the *gambang kromong* ensemble was able, as the *orkes gambang* had not been, to play satisfactorily the *pribumi* folk music of Batavia and the surrounding regions—primarily music of the Betawi and the Sundanese. (This was not the elaborate gamelan music of the Central Javanese courts or of the Javanese and Sundanese puppet plays.) And thus it was now able to accompany the very popular—and sometimes very rowdy if not scabrous—couple dancing typical of *ronggeng* performances.⁵⁴

I find Phoa’s account very plausible. Margaret Kartomi, however, implicitly contradicts it when she says that “female singer-dancers danced with male customers” to the accompaniment of “a syncretic musical form called *gambang* (or, as it was later known, *gambang kromong*)” in the mid-1700s (2000:281). She does not give any direct evidence for this statement, but obliquely she mentions a 1751 edict by the Governor-General of the DEI

⁵³ The term Phoa uses for the men’s dance, and the one I heard in the field, was *ngibing*. (Malona Sri Repelita [1995] also reports it.) The dance typically involves a demonstration, often drunken, sometimes parodic, of sexual desire or infatuation. It corresponds to what Henry Spiller, in his book on social dancing among the Sundanese of West Java, calls “free dancing.” “Over the course of the twentieth century,” Spiller writes, “free dancing . . . was systematized and codified . . . morph[ing] into a named dance genre with normative conventions and rules” (2010:144). The name of this codified Sundanese dance genre is *ibing tayub*, and in today’s Sundanese usage *ibing* or *ngibing* refers to various styles of formalized male dance (detailed in Atmadibrata 1997; see also Sujana 2002). But this is not what it means in the context of *gambang kromong*, where *ngibing* refers to whatever dance an amateur man does when he comes forward from among the guests or spectators to dance with a woman from the hired orchestra. Some *gambang kromong* songs have specified dance-movements in addition to “free dancing”: in *Balo-balo*, for example, the male and female dancers turn away from each other and rub their behinds together (I heard this described as *adu pantat*, a battle of the butts); in *Glatik Nguknguk* they squat and hop like birds. (I thank Andrew Weintraub for alerting me to the contrasting meanings of *ngibing* in Sundanese dance and in *gambang kromong*.)

⁵⁴ A terse but pungent description of the rowdy kind of *ronggeng* dancing (though *ronggeng* is not named in the text) occurs in a VOC edict from 1722. (The Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC, was the Dutch mercantile company that controlled much of the Indonesian archipelago in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.) The 1722 edict forbids such dancing, calling it an *ergerlyk en aanstootelyk spel van ranje-panje of grypen en grabbelen*. No Dutch scholars I have consulted can define *ranje-panje*, which does not appear in dictionaries; but the sentence equates it with *grypen en grabbelen*. *Grijpen* (the modern spelling) is cognate with the English *grip* and *grope*; *grabbelen* has no English cognate but it deserves one, which I am happy to supply: this is “a shocking and scandalous entertainment involving *ranje-panje*, or groping and grabbling” (H. Zwaardcroon, 6 October 1722, in Chijs 1885-1900, 4:158).

concerning performances of “Chinese *wayang* and *tandak* or *ronggeng*” that encourage gambling and lewd behavior in the audience.⁵⁵ *Tandak* and *ronggeng* are Sundanese and Javanese terms for female singer-dancers who dance with men (*pengibing*); but Phoa states clearly that until the introduction of the Sundanese instruments ca. 1880, men did not *ngibing* with the *cokek*. Kartomi apparently equates the Governor-General’s “*tandak* or *ronggeng*” with *cokek*, which would mean that the *cokek* were dancing with the men (one cannot have a *ronggeng* event otherwise) and would invalidate Phoa’s statement. I, however, take “*tandak* or *ronggeng*” literally and interpret the 1751 edict as referring to Sundanese-style *ronggeng* events, featuring Sundanese dancing girls and male *pengibing* and accompanied by some form of Sundanese ensemble (perhaps of the sort now called *ketuk tilu*). The 1751 edict gave control of both Chinese *wayang* and “*tandak* or *ronggeng*” performances to Chinese “revenue-farmers” (*pachters*) who managed the performing groups and paid fees to the government for every performance. These were definitely distinct events. Both were run by Chinese; but that does not mean that the music of both was Chinese music.

***Gambang kromong* in the late-colonial period (1900-1942)**

Returning to Phoa’s account: by the turn of the century, *gambang kromong*’s association with brothels had brought the music itself into disrepute. Phoa says parents discouraged their children from learning to play the instruments, for fear they would be led into

⁵⁵ J. Mossel, 6 December 1751, in *Chijs 1885-1900*, 6:110-113. Although the English translation “Chinese *wayang* and *tandak* or *ronggeng*” is ambiguous (are both types of performance Chinese, or only *wayang*?), in the original Dutch text (“*de wayangs of Chineese toneelspellen en de rongings of het tandacken*”) it is clear that “Chinese” applies only to the *wayang* and not to the *tandak* or *ronggeng*. Other references indicate that the *wayang* stories were indeed Chinese in origin (justifying the term “Chinese *wayang*”), but both the *wayang* actor-singers and the dancing girls (i.e., the *tandak* or *ronggeng*) were *pribumi* (Go 1966:194, Phoa 1949:38, Liem [1933]:130 [=2004:157-158]).

the dissolute life of the *suhian*. However, some elder musicians in Batavia who loved the old *orkes gambang* music sought to reclaim it, forming in 1913 the Vereeniging Ngo Hong Lauw with the aim of rehabilitating *gambang kromong*. The Sundanese instruments introduced by Bek Teng Tjoe were not expelled from the ensemble—they had become fully integrated into it—but more emphasis was placed on the *pobin* and the non-dance songs, rather than the Sundanese and Betawi popular songs with dance. Ngo Hong Lauw also maintained a *wayang sin pe* troupe.

This is as far as Phoa Kian Sioe goes. When recording began in the DEI, *gambang kromong* had three main repertoires: the instrumental *pobin*, thought to be Chinese in origin (and for which music notation in Chinese characters existed; see Figure 6.6), the Malay-language songs, the melodies of which may or may not have been Chinese in origin, and Sundanese and Betawi urban folk songs and instrumental pieces, suitable for male-female dancing.⁵⁶ When I researched *gambang kromong* in Tangerang in 1990 in order to record it,⁵⁷ I was given convenient designations for these repertoires, which I shall use here. In 1990, the songs without *pengibing* were called *lagu lama*, “old songs” or alternatively *lagu dalem*, “inside,” “deep” (or, perhaps, “core”) songs. The *pobin* were also classified as *lagu lama/lagu dalem*, but they could be called simply *pobin* (as I shall do here, reserving *lagu lama* for melodies with singing). And, most intriguingly, the Sundanese/Betawi songs, the ones people

⁵⁶ *Gambang kromong* ensembles also played the *wayang sin pe* repertoire, but apparently without the gamelan instruments that had been introduced in the 1880s. That is, for *wayang sin pe* the ensemble returned to the instrumentation of the *orkes gambang*. *Wayang sin pe* did not survive World War II (Wajang Sinpe 1956). According to a memoir published in 1956 describing performances the writer (born ca. 1908) saw as a child, the children acting in *wayang sin pe* were *peranakan* like himself and did not speak Chinese (ibid.). Another writer confirms that the children memorized their speeches and songs in Chinese, even though this was “a foreign language to them.” They were aided in performance by an adult prompter, who, if needed, sang along with them from behind a screen (Nio 1935:199).

⁵⁷ Some of the recordings are published on Yampolsky 1991b.

danced to, were called *lagu sayur*, “vegetable” songs.⁵⁸ I could not get an explanation of this term; in my album notes I tried out the notion that because the *lagu sayur* were in the 1990s far and away the most popular part of the *gambang kromong* repertoire, the musicians perhaps considered them the songs that put food on the table.

The first company to make commercial recordings of DEI music—the Gramophone Company, which visited Singapore in May 1903 and recorded music for the *stambul* theater, including two *kroncong*—did not record any *gambang kromong*. The next, though—Beka, recording in Batavia in 1906—did, producing ten sides with four *pobin* and six *lagu lama*.⁵⁹ All told, I have discographical entries for 349 sides produced by various companies before World War I. (This number is nearly three times that for known *kroncong* recordings before the war.) About one quarter of these were *pobin*. The rest were mostly what would now be called *lagu lama*, plus some of the titles now known as *lagu sayur* (and others with Sundanese or Javanese titles suggesting that they fit into the *sayur* category).

Judging from the number of sides issued, *gambang kromong* before World War I was one of the most successful of gramophone genres in the DEI, exceeded only by *stambul* music (which at that time included *kroncong*) and Central Javanese gamelan music. It achieved this success without performer-centered marketing (since there was as yet no mechanism for

⁵⁸ Phoa Kian Sioe does not report this term. He divided the repertoire into *lagu lama*, which were for him entirely *pobin*, and *lagu populair*, which for him were the Malay-language songs without dancing. He does not give any term for the danceable songs. Margaret Kartomi (2000:293) gives *lagu dalem* as an alternative term for *lagu sayur*, not, as I was told, an alternative for *lagu lama*; one of the published sources in her list of references also gives this usage (Sispardjo 1983:7, which she cites as Dinas Kebudayaan Jakarta). On the other hand, Ninuk Kleden-Probonegoro’s information (1996:51) and David Kwa’s (2000:7) fit with mine. Both report two classes of repertoire, *lagu dalem* and *lagu sayur*; neither gives the term *lagu lama*, but the titles they list as *lagu dalem* are ones my informants called *lagu lama*. Kleden-Probonegoro, Kwa, and I all agree on the titles to be classed as *lagu sayur*.

⁵⁹ Beka also recorded six sides of *gambang rancak*, a narrative form. I do not know whether the accompaniment for *gambang rancak* was the whole *gambang kromong* ensemble or only the *gambang*. In any case I am excluding all narrative and theatrical *gambang* recordings from this discussion and from the statistics.

promoting star singers), and without “rapid turnover of repertoire”: on the 268 known *lagu* sides (i.e., not *pobin* and not narrative) recorded before World War I, there are only 114 distinct titles. Half of those titles (56) were recorded only once, but the other half (58) were recorded repeatedly (several seven times, one 16 times) and account for 212 sides. The turnover, as I suggested in chapter 1, was turnover of *product*, in this case new performances or new realizations of items in the shared repertoire of all *gambang kromong* groups. Turnover was also achieved through the device of presenting identical material in superficially different versions. Roughly half of the 349 recordings are identified not as *gambang kromong* but as *gambang piano*. According to Phoa Kian Sioe, *gambang piano* was the invention of Bek Tjoe Kong Koen from Kampung Kwitang in Batavia, who brought a piano into the *gambang kromong* ensemble, ca. 1900. But in the recordings I have heard there is no piano but rather a *yang qin* (struck zither), along with (it seems; the instrumentation is often hard to discern) *gambang*, flute, *sanxian*, Chinese fiddles, and small percussion, with vocal in the pieces that are not *pobin*. No *kromong*, gongs, or Sundanese drums. This seems to be, then, a modification of the *orkes gambang*, with *yang qin* added. The repertoire on records appears to be exactly the same as for *gambang kromong*—the same *pobin*, *lagu lama*, and *lagu sayur*.⁶⁰

If so much of *gambang kromong* recording was devoted to multiple performances of shared repertoire, undifferentiated by the names of singers or performing groups, was *gambang kromong*, in this period before World War I, therefore an urban folk music like *kroncong*, which also had a limited repertoire? I think not. *Kroncong*'s repertoire was much more limited—two melodies—and could be sung by anybody who knew a couple of *pantun*.

⁶⁰ No *gambang piano* recordings were made after World War I. Here I treat *gambang piano* as simply a variant of *gambang kromong* and combine the statistics for the two ensembles.

The *gambang kromong* performers were professional to a degree not required of *kroncong* singers: clearly with a repertoire of at least 114 titles the *cokek* in the pre-war years had a far more demanding job than that of *kroncong* singers. Thus, while the *pobin* (notated, undanceable, without singers) belonged to the realm of art music, the *lagu* sector of *gambang kromong* before World War I was indeed a popular music, albeit one that lacked star performers and rapid turnover of repertoire.

In the years from 1925 (when recording resumed after World War I) to 1942 (when it stopped again because of World War II), *gambang kromong* did acquire named performers (though not promoted systematically so as to become stars), but at the same time it apparently became less important to the record industry: I have entries for only 75 sides issued in this period, less than a quarter of the production before World War I. Sixteen sides were *pobin*, 59 were *lagu*. Again there was a significant amount of re-recording of repertoire, accounting for one-quarter of all the sides. Slightly more than half of the *lagu* titles were new to the (known) recorded repertoire, which indicates some rejuvenation, but 22 new titles in 17 years is not precisely rapid turnover.

This decline in recordings suggests a decline in the genre's popularity with the people who bought records—the middle class and the wealthy. A 1938 article by Sie Boen Lian, a medical doctor with a scholarly interest in both the arts of the Chinese homeland and the hybridized arts of the *peranakan*, corroborates it. Sie says that in earlier times *gambang kromong* was popular among both Chinese and *pribumi* (*de Maleiers*) in Batavia and the surrounding regions (*omgeving*): no wedding or anniversary could be properly celebrated in well-to-do (*gegoede*) Chinese circles without a *gambang kromong* ensemble and its singer-

dancers.⁶¹ But in recent times, he says, interest in this music has dried up. Before, a *gambang kromong* association could count on its members and donors to cover the costs of maintaining the orchestra and the expenses of performances; now, if interest among the Chinese community remains so scant, *gambang kromong* is doomed to disappear and be replaced by “ordinary Jazz” (*de ordinaire Jazz muziek*).

Sie Boen Lian may have exaggerated: *gambang kromong* was still recorded in the 1930s, and as late as 1938 it was broadcast from three to six times a month on Batavia radio stations, rarely for less than two hours per broadcast, sometimes for three and a half.⁶² The decline Sie speaks of would have been only among the urban consumer class of Chinese, but it does indeed seem to have occurred. What accounts for it? I can offer a hypothesis. In the interwar years, the great issues for educated, well-to-do *peranakan* were whether to orient themselves politically and culturally to the Chinese homeland, to Europe, or to the cause of an independent

⁶¹ Sie Boen Lian gives a charming description of the *lagu lama* in this article: “Only the singing is truly Malay. The accompaniment is Chinese. The flute is played in a Chinese manner. Even the Indonesian instruments are played in a Chinese manner. The main lines of the Malay melodies are maintained, but the ornamentation woven around them is Chinese. And in between the vocal strophes, when the instrumentalists are given more or less a free hand, the Chinese spirit comes clearly to the fore. In short, the whole strikes one as a Chinese fantasy on a Malay melody, a fantasy in the good sense of the word” (Sie Boen Lian 1938:84). I should point out that specialists in Chinese music for whom I have played *lagu lama* recordings hear the Chinese instruments, of course, but are not struck by a Chinese character in the music itself.

⁶² For 1938 I have tabulated a total of 54 broadcasts of *gambang kromong* over Batavia radio stations, given by five *gambang kromong* orchestras (chapter 4). There were also, in 1938, 39 broadcasts from Surabaya that featured mainly music for a “*yang khiem [=yang qin] orkest*” but always included one or two pieces contrastively designated *gambang kromong*, as well as two or three untitled “extras” with singers. These broadcasts could not easily be heard in Batavia. The Surabaya *gambang kromong* repertoire is mysterious: out of 26 such titles listed in the program guides for these broadcasts, only two are also found in Batavia-produced gramophone records or radio broadcasts. Since singers are indicated in the radio guides only for the “extras,” the Surabaya *gambang kromong* pieces seem to be all instrumental; and as most of their titles are in some form of Chinese, they seem to be a counterpart to the *pobin* repertoire in Batavia—but with virtually no matching items. Whether the repertoire of songs in these broadcasts is equally disjunct cannot be determined, since the titles are not given in the program guides. As “extras,” they could be anything—*kroncong*, *stambul*, or other popular songs adapted to the *gambang kromong* instrumentation, where only the bowed lutes could play all the tones of a diatonic melody; or they could be the *lagu lama* and *lagu sayur* of Batavia; or a corresponding repertoire of songs special to Surabaya.

Indonesia.⁶³ For none of these factions would the localized hybrid music of Batavia, neither wholly Chinese nor wholly Indonesian, and with a disreputable underside, have been a desirable symbol. Charles Coppel notes, moreover, that among Chinese in Indonesia in the early twentieth century

a nationalist movement [had] emerged which fostered a corporate [i.e., group] identity amongst the Indonesian Chinese, pride in China and Chinese culture, and a sense of shame amongst the *peranakan* Chinese over their lack of command of the Chinese language and the extent to which Indonesian customs and beliefs had adulterated their style of life (1983:14-15).

Gambang kromong thus would have had lower prestige than “pure” Chinese arts. And if we think simply in terms of entertainment, the most novel, exciting, and alluring urban cultural forms in the 1920s and ‘30s—movies, jazz, dance music, popular songs—came to the DEI from the West, either directly or by way of the Western-oriented popular-culture industries in Shanghai and Singapore. Just as *kroncong* was nearly overcome by Western dance idioms and jazz (and rescued only by the coming of the Japanese), so, I propose, did *gambang kromong* find its urban Chinese audience enticed away to the same Western popular forms.

There was also, I wish to suggest, another factor. Out in the towns and semi-rural regions surrounding Jakarta, beginning probably in the late 1920s, *gambang kromong*—already prominent outside Batavia as the music for Chinese celebrations (witness Sie Boen Lian)—had become stronger still, through its links to the Betawi theater form *lenong*. I suggest that the rise of *lenong* in the environs of Batavia and the decline of *gambang kromong* in the city were related developments.

⁶³ Suryadinata 1981 and 1979.

Lenong (?1920s-present)

Several reports date the beginnings of *lenong* to the 1920s or early 1930s, or more specifically to the appearance of talking pictures in the DEI.⁶⁴ But documentation of early *lenong* is very thin, so much so that we must largely imagine its early form on the basis of the better-documented *lenong* of later decades, or on memories recorded long after the fact.

Lenong was, and largely still is, a folk theater, though drawing some of its musical repertoire from popular music. It was clearly modeled on *stambul* and *opera*, but it featured the local Betawi dialect of Malay/Indonesian and used local stories of legendary tough guys or of the conflicts between Betawi peasants and landowners in the old days of large agricultural estates. An article published in 1954 by the leftist critic and composer Amir Pasaribu calls it an “art of the common people” (*seni rakjat*); he indicates that it exists both in Jakarta and in the surrounding regions but is more “imitative” (that is, more Westernized) in the city, though even the village form can no longer be said to be “very authentic” (*sangat authentiek*); and he excuses himself from describing it at length because “readers are already familiar with it” (*para pembatja tjukup mengenal lenong*).

Reporting on a *lenong* performance in a village south of Jakarta, an hour’s walk from the nearest train station, Pasaribu remarks that stories that might take three hours if performed straight through would be stretched out to a whole night’s length by interpolated extras and dances having nothing to do with the plot. (This stretching-out was needed because the hosts of a wedding or celebration would feel embarrassed and ashamed if their guests did not stay

⁶⁴ Grijns (1976:175) and Kartomi (2000:293, citing Koesasi 1992) say 1930s; Pasaribu (1954:552) and Go Gien Tjwan (1966:203) say advent of talkies.

until nearly dawn.) The music was provided by *gambang kromong*, playing almost continually throughout the night, and Pasaribu stresses the “Chinese” feel of the event.

The practice of including extras and entr’actes is clearly a survival from the early years of *lenong*, which coincided with the heyday of the same practice in *stambul* and *opera*. The influence of *stambul* is also seen in the use of painted backdrops in *lenong*, and the presence today, both in *lenong* music and in the music for *peranakan* weddings, of a class of songs called *stambul*.⁶⁵ Ninuk Kleden-Probonegoro (1996:52-54) reports that during her initial research on *lenong*, in 1973, *stambul* songs had a role similar to their role in early *stambul* theater: they were used for emotional scenes—scenes of sadness, happiness, or disappointment.⁶⁶ By 1995, when Kleden-Probonegoro resumed her research, *stambul* songs were less common, because, she was told, there were no longer enough singers who could express emotion through *stambul*. (This may mean that skill in improvising verses to *stambul* melodies—necessary to make the songs relevant to the scene in progress—had declined.) She was also told that most audiences no longer wanted *stambul* songs.

In the *gambang kromong* repertoire for weddings and celebrations, however, *stambul* songs are still a key element. All of the ones I have heard, live and on cassette, have the form I identified earlier as that of *stambul II* (or *Stambul Jampang* played slow). Spontaneous singing of *pantun* verses by the hired performers is the rule, sometimes with ad hoc references to

⁶⁵ That there are songs called *stambul* in *lenong* and *gambang kromong* today does not, of course, mean they were a regular part of the repertoire before World War II. Oen Oen Hok, however, told me that they were; and indeed it is hard to see why they would have been adopted *after* the war, when *stambul* theater was dead. Four of the 165 non-*pobin* titles in *gambang kromong* broadcasts from Batavia in 1938 are *stambul*, suggesting that *stambul* songs were considerably less important in *gambang kromong* before the war, when there was a much larger active repertoire of *lagu* to choose from, than they became afterwards.

⁶⁶ I was told in 1990 that in *lenong* the *stambul* songs are used for sad scenes (Kleden-Probonegoro’s happiness option was not confirmed). But according to my observations of *gambang kromong* weddings, where *stambul* songs accompany dancing, they carry no connotation of sadness.

guests or musicians present at the event; and sometimes self-confident *pengibing* may sing a *pantun* or two themselves.

Other current or former staples of the repertoire of *lenong* music—*jali-jali* and *persi*—are, like *stambul*, still common in the music for domestic celebrations. All three of these titles now function as classes encompassing a number of *lagu sayur* with different names: there is *Jali-jali Ujung Menteng*, *Jali-jali Pasar Malam*, *Stambul Bila*, *Stambul Siliwangi*, *Persi Rusak*, *Persi Jalan*, etc.⁶⁷ *Pobin* and *lagu lama*, on the other hand, are not played in either *lenong* or present-day *gambang kromong*, with the exception of one *pobin*, *Kong Ji Lok*, an auspicious piece that is always played to open a domestic celebration and is sometimes played to open a *lenong* performance.⁶⁸ Except for this one *pobin*, the current repertoire of both *gambang kromong* for celebrations and *lenong* is entirely *lagu sayur* plus songs from *pop* and *dangdut*.

If we read the *lenong* of the post-Independence decades back into the 1920s and '30s, we see a folk theater, using the *gambang kromong* orchestra but eschewing all of its older repertoire (*pobin*, *lagu lama*) and instead highly receptive to the music and other conventions (backdrops, entr'actes) of urban popular theater, yet applying these to stories of semi-rural, agricultural life. What I am proposing, then, is that the rising importance of *lenong* in the 1930s lowered the status of *gambang kromong* and made it less attractive to the urban Chinese of the

⁶⁷ Further research is needed to determine what the differences are between members of these classes. When I asked this question specifically about *stambul* songs, a musician told me: “the melodies are all the same, but the sound is different. The way they go is different” (*lagu-lagunya sama, nadanya lain; ya, jalannya lain*). On another occasion, a different musician said virtually the same thing about *Jali-jali*: “the melodies are almost the same, but the introductions are different and the pitch [=key] is different” (*hampir sama lagunya; intro lain, tonnya lain*). What this must mean is that the melodies are indeed pretty much the same for each class, because they all have the same chord-structure, but they differ (a) in key (thus perhaps requiring different melodic realizations to accommodate singers’ registers), (b) in distinctive melodic introductions before the standard chord-structure begins, and (c) in performance practice. *Stambul Rusak* and *Persi Rusak*, for example, are “broken” (*rusak*) by spoken interruptions.

⁶⁸ *Kong Ji Lok* is by now perhaps the only surviving *pobin*. It can be heard in Yampolsky 1991b, track 1.

consumer class who had hitherto been its patrons. *Lenong* would thus have contributed—along with the drift of the urban audience toward the more glamorous European and American forms of popular music—to the decline of *gambang kromong* in the city.

Gambang kromong after Independence (1945-present)

After World War II and the four years of the Indonesian Revolution, whatever presence *gambang kromong* had previously had in Batavia (by this time Jakarta) was reduced to a sliver: it was still the music of *peranakan* celebrations and the *lenong* theater, but its locus was the outskirts of Jakarta, not the city itself. The older elements of the repertoire—*pobin*, *lagu lama*, music for *wayang sin pe*, the Chinese-style dances (*Si Pat Mo*, etc.)—had largely fallen away; what was left was *lagu sayur*, now dominated by the song-categories *stambul*, *jali-jali*, and *persi*.⁶⁹

An effort was made in the early 1950s to revive *gambang kromong* as a marketable genre on records: six 78-rpm discs (12 sides) were issued on Irama, the first label to produce Indonesian 78s after Independence.⁷⁰ These were played on the radio and were apparently well-known, but they did not succeed in restoring *gambang kromong* to the mainstream. One of the sides was a *lagu lama* (*Nori Kotjok*); the others were *lagu sayur*, some with texts

⁶⁹ The recordings of *pobin* and *lagu lama* on volume 3 of *Music of Indonesia* (Yampolsky 1991b) are throwbacks to the old style of *gambang kromong*. In 1990, when I went looking for *gambang kromong* to record for that CD, I was fortunate to encounter an ensemble-leader, Oen Oen Hok, who remembered pieces from the old repertoire, and whose wife, Masnah, remembered how to sing them. (At that time, there were perhaps only two other singers, Ating and Talen, who could sing the old repertoire.) Oen Hok was able to round up other elderly musicians who also remembered the music, and the group performed for me a number of what I find to be extremely beautiful *lagu lama* and *pobin*. But Oen Hok and most of those players are gone now.

⁷⁰ In the Irama 1953/1954 catalogue, these discs are described as “played in the *gambang* style [*irama gambang*], which is popular among the original denizens of Jakarta, especially the Chinese” (*digemari oleh penduduk aseli Djakarta, terutama penduduk Tiong Hoa*). This remark is interesting in view of the later efforts to erase the Chinese from *gambang kromong*.

consisting of *pantun* exchanged by male and female singers, and some with fixed texts. The fixed texts were, I believe, something new in *gambang kromong*. We saw the move from *pantun* to fixed texts earlier, in *kroncong*; here, too, the effect was to remove the *lagu sayur* with fixed texts from the domain of the audience and plant them in the domain of the singers (where the *lagu lama* already were). If a song's texts were *pantun*, anyone could sing them: people from among the guests at an event could trade *pantun* with the hired singers. The *pantun* were expressions of a culture shared by the singers and the audience. The songs with fixed texts, on the other hand, were intended as representations of Betawi and *peranakan* life to an audience of outsiders. Here is the text of perhaps the best-known of this latter group, *Gambang Semarang*, an AABA song composed in 1946 and issued first as a *langgam kroncong* (Irama IRS 7, 1951?), and then reissued (Irama G 233-2, 1953?) in the group of six *gambang kromong* 78s.⁷¹ It exemplifies the outsider's gaze:

Empat penari kian kemari jalan berlenggang, aduh,	Four dancers dance in this direction and that, their arms swaying, oh!
Langkah gayanya menurut suara irama gambang.	Their movements follow the sound of gambang music.
Sambil menyanyi jongkok berdiri kaki melintang, aduh,	As they sing they dip and rise, their feet at an angle, oh!
Sungguh jenaka waktu mereka tari berdendang.	It's truly amusing when they dance and sing.
Bersuka ria gelak ketawa semua orang, kerna,	Everyone has a great time and laughs loudly

⁷¹ The melody was composed by Oei Yok Siang; Sidik Pramono then set lyrics to it. Both the composer and the lyricist were based in Magelang, Central Java. The lyrics here, and the date of composition of the melody, come from Tjia 1950. As for the dates of the 78s: both IRS 7 and G 233-2 are listed in the Irama catalogue for 1953-1954. I estimate a somewhat earlier date for IRS 7, but the catalogue provides a *terminus ante quem*. Incidentally, a version of *Gambang Semarang* is heard on Ubiet's *Keroncong Tenggara* CD (footnote 20) and may be seen and heard on Youtube, <http://.youtube.com/watch?v=CvyNVuvEw9A>; and a sedate version by Safitri is included on the *Keroncong in Lounge* CD described in footnote 22.

Hati tertarik gerak gerak si tukang kendang.

At the movements of the drummer.

Empat penari membikin hati menjadi senang, aduh,
Itulah dia malam gembira Gambang Semarang.

Four dancers please one's heart, oh!
That's how it goes at a happy evening of
Gambang Semarang.

In the late 1960s a new version of *gambang kromong* emerged, which came to be known as *gambang kromong modern* or *gambang kromong pop*. The pioneers were the female singer Lilis Suryani and the male singer and guitarist Suhaery Mufti (who had played and sung on the Irama 78s), but the person who truly popularized the new style was the singer Benyamin S. (1939-1995).⁷² Both Lilis Suryani and Benyamin (and possibly Suhaery also, though I don't know this) identified themselves as Betawi, and their key innovation was to give the music simultaneously a strong Betawi flavor and a "modernized" pop cast. They did this by a combination of strategies: deemphasizing both the Chinese and the Sundanese elements in the instrumentation and playing-style and instead adding guitars and other pop-band instruments; creating a wholly new repertoire of songs using Jakarta and the Betawi ethnic group as their frame of reference; and by singing in the Betawi dialect of Indonesian and taking on the comic personae of the Betawi *rakyat* (common folk). So far as I know, they did not draw on the conventions or repertoire of *lenong* music. These songs used fixed texts rather than *pantun*, and they are, like the fixed-text Irama songs, representations of Betawi life to outsiders. They often involve spoken dialogue between male and female singers, and indeed their underlying mode is as much the comic skit as the song. *Gambang kromong modern* became very popular

⁷² For a study of Benyamin S. in the 1970s, with attention to *gambang modern*, see Hanan and Koesasi 2011: 40-57.

in Jakarta and well-known outside, and Benyamin went on to a successful career not only in music but also as an actor in films and television. (In 2011 he was posthumously declared a National Hero, *pahlawan nasional*.)

Although there is no indication that Benyamin himself ever sought to provoke anti-Chinese prejudice, it is not, I think, coincidental that his Betawi-flavored form of *gambang kromong* emerged at precisely the time when the political situation of Chinese-Indonesians had taken a sharp turn for the worse. President Suharto's New Order—which had come to power in 1965 because of a thwarted coup-attempt that toppled Soekarno, Indonesia's first president, and was blamed on Indonesian Communists—found it useful to question the loyalty of Chinese-Indonesians to Indonesia, insinuating that their true allegiance lay with Communist China. Open displays of Chineseness, including the celebration of Chinese religious holidays, the teaching of Chinese, and the publishing of Chinese-language newspapers, were forbidden. So far as I know, Chinese weddings continued to be held in the regions surrounding Jakarta, with *gambang kromong* accompaniment, but only for the virtually invisible community of lower-class *peranakan* Chinese. More socially visible Chinese kept their Chinese practices hidden away. Thus a de-Sinicized *gambang kromong modern* appeared at precisely that moment, in the late 1960s, when a rebranding of *gambang kromong* as an all-Betawi rather than a *peranakan* or mixed *peranakan*-Betawi genre first became practicable.

From that time on, there have been two forms of *gambang kromong*: the Chinese strain, evident at *peranakan* weddings and on cassettes marketed in *peranakan* communities but largely unknown to outsiders, and the public Betawi strain, promoted on television and cassettes and in self-conscious displays of Betawi ethnicity. The repertoire of *gambang*

kromong modern is almost entirely songs in the comic Betawi mode, with fixed texts and sometimes improvised dialogue. Perhaps an older Betawi song like *Jali-jali* will be thrown in, but no *pobin* or songs with explicit Chinese associations. In contrast, the repertoire of “Chinese” *gambang kromong*, which is shared by *lenong*, uses a wide range of *lagu sayur*, including many songs from the *stambul*, *jali-jali*, and *persi* categories; but the musicians will also play songs from *gambang kromong modern* and adaptations of *dangdut*, *kroncong*, and Indonesian pop songs. Since the two eponymous instruments are pentatonic, their ability to play in diatonic melodies is limited; often they sit out or play only occasionally, when the melody lands on a pitch they have. Guitars, keyboards, and wind instruments like trumpet or saxophone are typically added to the ensemble to cope with the diatonic melodies, in which case the ensemble is called *gambang kromong kombinasi* or *gambang kromong modern*.

The emphatically *pribumi* character of *gambang kromong modern* established a line of demarcation between Chinese and *pribumi* forms that had never previously been evident in the music, or not since the Sundanese instruments were introduced in the 1880s. The *cokek* dancers were said to have been *pribumi* from the start (Phoa 1949:38, and see footnote 55 here), and there has apparently been a long tradition of *pribumi* musicians playing Chinese music.⁷³ When I researched *gambang kromong* in 1990 and again in the early 2000s, I found that functioning *gambang kromong* orchestras playing for *peranakan* events were thoroughly mixed, with *pribumi* and *peranakan* musicians.

⁷³ Liem Thian Joe reports that in the 1850s *pribumi* players of the Chinese ceremonial *pat im* ensemble were regularly brought from Ambarawa, a town in the mountains, to play for *peranakan* Chinese events in Semarang ([1933]:130, [=2004:157-158]).

Since Soeharto's fall in 1998, the relaxation of strictures on the expression of Chinese identity has not led to a resurgence of the *peranakan* strain of *gambang kromong*. Instead, Chinese-Indonesians have sought to reaffirm their connections to "pure" Chinese culture. It is again the case that—as Coppel observed in the passage quoted earlier, referring to the early decades of the twentieth century—the "adulterated" cultural forms unique to *peranakan* society are disparaged even by *peranakan*.

A final remark concerning performer-centered marketing in *gambang kromong*. This practice emerged in *gambang kromong* only in the interwar years. It continued in the 1950s with Irama's six discs; and the Betawi refashioning of the genre in the late 1960s made full use of the star power of Lilis Suryani and Benyamin S. But the post-1960s *peranakan* form of *gambang kromong*, marketed on cassettes, reverted to the early practice, with singers rarely identified. This was, I believe, a function of the genre's situation: *peranakan gambang kromong* was marketed on a smaller scale than Benyamin's *gambang kromong modern*, let alone *kroncong* in its prime, and it had a reliable live scene within the *peranakan* community. Mobilizing the print media, radio, and television to create *gambang kromong* stars would have been too expensive for the cassette producers and could perhaps have generated backlash, given public prejudice during the New Order against Chinese-Indonesians. Instead, the genre relied on product turnover: new cassettes with new performances—by unnamed performers—of the same basic *lagu sayur* repertoire.

Does the absence of performer-centered marketing—when the necessary systems are available, as they were not at the height of the genre's media popularity before World War I—indicate that *gambang kromong* is no longer a popular music? The answer depends on whether

one accepts the idea that a popular music can be marketed on a scale sufficiently intimate—the scale of a single region, for example, or a single ethnolinguistic group—that star performers are not needed to generate audience interest. To deny this, I suggest, is to insist upon a criterion of sheer *size* that obscures the kinship of vast global popular musics with small local manifestations of similar qualitative and systemic principles.

6.4 *Summary and conclusion*

Consider the striking transformations of these genres over the long haul:

- *Kroncong* rises out of the lower class, moves from an association with one ethnic group (the Eurasians) and one locality (Batavia) to a national, ethnically neutral popularity, and later changes from an entertainment music to a symbol of national struggle and idealism and a vehicle for both nostalgia and government propaganda. In essence what was originally a song form becomes a large repertoire of individualized melodies and lyrics and then a generalized idiom. Only a handful of pre-1942 songs and perhaps a score of Revolutionary-era and New Order songs survive into the twenty-first century. A core instrumentation is established and persists but is now flexibly supplemented or replaced by other instruments.
- The repertoire of “numbered *stambul*” melodies starts out with a theatrical function, then loses it as the theater itself converts to a new aesthetic. The repertoire boils down to two song forms (or two versions of the same one), which are elaborated into a sub-repertoire of *kroncong* consisting of named pieces that share that genre’s ethnic and geographical neutrality. As the repertoire of *kroncong* shrinks over time, that of *stambul* songs within *kroncong* also shrinks. But the same song (s) that entered *kroncong* also descend socially to become an element in the lower-class music of a specific ethnic group (*peranakan* Chinese) in a specific locality (the environs of Jakarta). There they develop into a new, separate repertoire of named pieces with virtually identical melodies but differing in textual theme or performance practice (stop-and-start, trumpet interludes, etc.). *Stambul* songs have no fixed instrumentation and instead follow the instrumentation of their parent genre: flexible Western instrumentation when part of the *stambul* theater; later the instrumentation of *kroncong* and *gambang kromong*.



Figure 6.7. Two gambang *kromong* cassette covers from the Jakarta region. Top: 1980s, Betawi-style *gambang kromong* with singers identified and featured singer (Benyamin S) pictured; no *stambul*, *jali-jali*, *persi*. Bottom: 1990s, Peranakan-style, with only ensemble and director identified; five *stambul*, one *jali-jali*.



Figure 6.8. Two gambang kromong cassette covers from the Jakarta region. Top: 1980s, all *jali-jali*. Bottom, 1990s, all *stambul*, advertised as having traits of *pop* and *ngibing* (cf. footnote 53, this chapter) Only the ensembles (and the director of one) are identified.

- *Gambang kromong*, initially associated with the *peranakan* Chinese in and around Batavia and accepted at all levels of *peranakan* society in Batavia,⁷⁴ forms in the 1930s a new association with the lower-class *lenong* theater and thereby becomes unattractive to the consumer class. (Or, in an alternative construction, it simply loses its appeal to consumers, not because they disdain *lenong* but because they are more attracted by Western and Westernized forms of popular music.) It continues into the twenty-first century as the music of lower-class Chinese celebrations on the fringes of Jakarta, retaining its core instrumentation but losing two of its three main repertoire categories (*pobin* and *lagu lama*). In Suharto's New Order (1966-1998), when the Chinese have to retreat from visibility, a Betawi-flavored *gambang kromong* emerges to become a localized popular music, especially popular in Jakarta but given some national exposure through the Jakarta-based media. The Betawi style of *gambang kromong* develops an almost entirely new repertoire, accepting only one or two songs (e.g., *Jali-jali* and *Onde-onde*) from the *peranakan* repertoire.

It is, of course, not surprising that genres shift their alliances and alignments over time; nor is it surprising that repertoire may wear out over the course of a century, with the hit songs of one decade forgotten in the next; nor that instrumentation may change as new instruments become available and new technical possibilities emerge. The point of this study of trajectories is to show that the *entities* of these genres have changed radically, despite the superficial continuity of the genre names. The terms *kroncong* and *gambang kromong* do not mean in 2012 what they meant in 1912. Neither does *stambul*, but even in 2012 *stambul* does not mean the same thing in the context of national popular music that it means among *peranakan* Chinese.

From elsewhere in the world, several genres come to mind with social trajectories parallel to those we have seen here. *Rembetika*, *fado*, and *tango* all started in the lower class and moved up, like *kroncong*. Blues entered mass media as urban vaudeville and then

⁷⁴ I omit from my summary the puzzling Surabaya repertoire listed in the radio program guides as *gambang kromong* (footnote 62).

discovered an audience for a grittier, rural sound, whereupon the genre split into two streams, urban and rural, roughly corresponding to lower-middle and fully lower class (in US, not DEI terms). In this regard, blues parallels the social descent of *stambul* and *gambang kromong*, except that neither of those genres could retain its middle-class audience after embracing the lower-class market.

In all of these cases we see a genre taken up by the record industry and turned into a popular music, acquiring features typical of popular music in general: accessibility, rapid turnover, and star performers. Yet each genre developed in its own way, influenced by its own complex of historical, social, cultural, and geographical conditions. Tango and rembetika, for example, depended for their success partly on a vicarious bourgeois fascination with dangerous, countercultural characters (the criminal, the gaucho, the *mangas*; the gypsy in flamenco may also fit here) or with the intense emotional life imputed by the popular imagination to the urban poor. *Kroncong* did not. Tango was accepted by the upper class of Buenos Aires only after it became a fad in Europe, in 1913-1914 (Collier 1995:61), but this acceptance does not seem to have required a *musical* change, and the orchestras that were prominent before the European success remained prominent afterwards; whereas *kroncong* became acceptable not because of external legitimation but by slowing down and becoming professionalized. Tango, rembetika, and fado existed in intimate café or tavern settings as well as on records. *Gambang kromong* developed in something similar, the *suhian*, and was performed live for celebrations; but *kroncong*, after it passed out of its urban folk stage, was primarily a mediated music; its only live scene was the public competition (*concours*), which from at least the 1920s was dominated by recording stars. Tango and fado became symbols of

their national culture; *kroncong* became, as popular genres often do, the music of a particular generation, but not of the whole nation.

The case of the *stambul* songs is different, since neither class nor ethnicity was initially a factor in their trajectory. The genre, smaller in scope than the two others I discuss, was orphaned by aesthetic changes that eliminated its theatrical function. It was then absorbed into *kroncong* and *gambang kromong* (and *lenong*), developing in different forms according to the class aspirations of the host genres.

A determining force in my picture of genre history in the late-colonial period is the taste of the “consumer class,” which rejected any musical association with the lower class. As I have pointed out, records and radio in the DEI did not offer the fantasy of violent emotion or rebellion against bourgeois society that tango and rembetika provided. The consumer class did not *want* those fantasies, I suggest; rather it wanted to distance itself entirely from the lower class, and, largely, from the rural and “regional” cultures of the DEI.⁷⁵ In fact, I propose—speculatively—that the fear of miscegenation prevalent in Dutch society in the DEI had a corresponding, mirror fear in middle- and upper-class *pribumi* and *peranakan* society: a fear not of racial but of *cultural* contamination through contact with lower-class practices and pleasures. The mass-mediated musics served to affirm the identity and privilege of the consumer class, to mark it off from the poor and rural. That is why *kroncong* had to distance itself from its folk

⁷⁵ Largely, but not entirely. The aristocratic genres of Central and West Java (gamelan, *langendriyan*, *macapat*, *tembang Sunda*, *degung*)—not rural, but certainly regional—retained prestige and were recorded and broadcast. From the middle of the 1930s, there was also recording and broadcasting of Sumatran music (mainly Minangkabau, Melayu, and some Toba Batak)—the result, I believe, of an effort by the Sumatran elite (both in Sumatra and in Batavia) to *assert* prestige for their own genres.

roots, and why *gambang kromong* would have seemed, to the consumer class, degraded by its association with *lenong*.

What we see in examining trajectories is the uniquely situated interaction over time of musical forms and practices with, on the one hand, specific cultural preoccupations (in the DEI: class, ethnicity, the appeal of the West and the modern), and, on the other, the imperatives of media and marketing.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation revolves around *kroncong*. In the early 1980s, during my fieldwork on Javanese gamelan music, I became familiar with *kroncong* as the popular music of the generation of Indonesians then in its fifties and sixties, the generation that had lived through the Japanese occupation and the four-year revolution that secured Indonesia's independence. At that time, *kroncong* had already acquired the strong patriotic connotations it still has today.

After that initial fieldwork, I began to investigate older recordings of Indonesian music, particularly the 78-rpm records made before World War II, and I found that *kroncong* had had a very different sound in colonial times. As I explained in chapter 5, the tempo of recordings made in the 1920s and 1930s was twice as fast that of *kroncong* recordings in the 1980s, and the tempo of recordings made before World War I was twice again as fast. And *kroncong* had undergone a striking social transformation as well. Before World War I it was the music of louts and lowlife, and it was strongly associated with Batavia, the colonial capital. In the interwar years, it was the dominant popular music genre, not only in Batavia but throughout Java and, to some extent, throughout the entire colony. Blended with jazz, tango, and rumba, it carried overtones not of poor, cramped neighborhoods but of urban sophistication and glamor. These transformations were evident in the music's recorded history, although by the 1980s and 1990s only the final slow, dignified, nostalgic stage was known—*kroncong's* rowdier, jazzier, uptempo days were forgotten.

The research reported here radiates out from the discovery that the recorded history of *kroncong* was showed a music radically different from its current image. (Imagine if all memory

and evidence of the history of jazz before the Modern Jazz Quartet or Dave Brubeck were lost, and then the recordings of Armstrong and Morton and Parker were discovered: one's understanding of the genre would be shattered.) Kroncong serves here as a demonstration of the value of early recordings as sources for the music history of Indonesia—especially the history of popular genres, ignored by the scholars of *gamelan* and *wayang* and rarely reported even in the popular press with any musical precision.

The central tool in the use of recordings as history is discography, which enables one to arrange recordings in chronological sequence (approximate or precise), revealing vectors of development and transformation. Coupled with research in contemporary documents and print publications, discography also illuminates the participants in the creation of the historical record: not only the artists whose sound is captured, but also the recording engineers, intermediaries, record companies, and broadcasting stations that chose to record certain genres and certain performers but not others. These resources make it clear that recordings are a specialized document, with a specific purpose: to appeal to those people who had enough money to buy gramophones and records.

In the DEI, the people who could afford the comparatively expensive technologies of gramophone and, later, radio were the comparatively small middle and upper classes, the “consumer class.” This means that what we have on record from the DEI, and what was broadcast on DEI radio, is what appealed to or was intended to appeal to that class. But why should that class have liked the musics that were marketed to it—*kroncong*, Hawaiian music, generalized European-model popular songs, Central Javanese court gamelan, Sundanese zither ensembles? Bourdieu shows that classes and class fractions represent themselves through

their tastes, declaring both who they are and who they are not; he remarks, trenchantly, that tastes are primarily *distastes*, demonstrating the superiority of one's own tastes to those of others. The consumer class could accept a *kroncong* that was distanced from its original lowlife milieu—it was self-evidently sophisticated and respectable, because it had shed the most obvious traits of the disreputable music it had been before World War One. Similarly, the consumer class among the ethnic Javanese welcomed recordings of the Central Javanese court-music repertoire, performed by court musicians, rather than the pre-World War One recordings of less elevated repertoire by less elevated performers. And the consumer class of Peranakan Chinese *rejected* *gambang kromong*, which had been a successful genre of recordings before the war, when it became associated with and, so to speak, contaminated by the village theater form *lenong*.

What commercial recordings provide evidence for, then, is the musical practices in any genre that were attractive to consumers, or, in the case of radio, to listeners (who were indeed consumers, though not of a physical product). It is likely, then, that if the music was not already, before media, patronized by the affluent, it underwent changes in order to reach the media audience. In some cases the consumer-friendly practices became the dominant practice for the genre as a whole—this is the case with *kroncong* and also with *tembang Sunda*, where the mediatized form became the standard for all performance. In other genres, however, practice splits into two or more versions. This is what happened with Javanese gamelan, where recordings focus on compositions that could be fitted, one way or another, into a three-minute form; in live performance, however, and on radio, the key repertoire consisted of pieces that would take fifteen or twenty minutes or more. Moreover, Javanese gamelan on records was

dominated by Central Javanese court musicians and court orchestras, leaving the far more numerous village gamelans and less refined non-court styles—including much of the East Javanese style and repertoire—unrecorded.

To the extent that the same conditions apply elsewhere, this tilt toward the affluent is a built-in bias that ethnomusicologists need to be alert to when using recordings as evidence for music history. But it is not a universal bias. In the United States, gramophone and radio technologies came quickly within reach of less affluent consumers, and thus with blues, for example, a lower-income market emerged that wanted down-home styles instead of, or as well as, the more polished, urban "classic" or "vaudeville" blues. With *rembetika*, for another example, a significant portion of the recordings feature themes of criminal life and drug use. Two explanations have been offered for this: that the records were within reach of the lower class, or that the middle class found in them a form of wishful rebellion against the repressive Metaxas regime. Whichever explanation is correct, the point here is that in using recordings one has to know not only the recordings but whom they were aimed at and, in essence, what they meant to their consumers.

The dissertation, then, presents case studies of mediatized music and contextualizes them within the media industries of the late-colonial era, with the aim both of presenting those studies and of showing the context within which any similar studies of mediatized DEI music in that period would have to be made. There is also a secondary theme that is meant to resonate with my other work, in particular my field recordings (Yampolsky 1991-99 and 2011c). I see in the mediated music of the late colonial era the prototype of the musical discourse of modern independent Indonesia. In modern Indonesia, as in the colonial era, the only musics with

national scope and currency are Indonesian-language popular music on the one hand, and Indonesian-language religious music on the other. Popular music is what gets airplay and television time; religious music is proposed as the antidote, for people who find popular music too secular or immoral. (Even most religious music, however, uses the idioms of popular music—straight Western pop for Christian music, and the Middle-East flavored forms resembling *dangdut* for Islamic music.) Three forms of traditional music—Central Javanese gamelan music, Sundanese *tembang* and *kacapi* ensembles, and Balinese gamelan—have national respect, though none of them has an audience outside its home region (and a dwindling audience even there, except in Bali). And two of these three were the dominant forms of traditional music on records and on radio eighty years ago. The idea of Indonesia as symbolized in Indonesian music is still one that finds no place for the country's one thousand small ethnicities: any representation of these cultures is done through popular music sung in regional languages, and has no presence outside the regions where those languages are spoken. The media no longer serve only the affluent—television, radio, VCDs and cassettes have reached virtually every corner of the country—but what they purvey is the fantasy of affluence, unattainable for most Indonesians. The map of Indonesia offered by the media is still skewed to the cities, with a perspective much like Saul Steinberg's famous 1976 *New Yorker* cover, "View of the world from 9th Avenue." The media map shows Indonesia from the viewpoint of the metropolis, with Jakarta hugely in the foreground, a few bumps in the distance for Bandung and Surabaya, and a sketch of a palace in Central Java and a temple gate in Bali. Today as in the colonial era, the media offer historical evidence—like the 78s, all of today's *pop*

and *dangdut* and *koplo* VCDs will be historical evidence soon enough—but the evidence is full of gaps and biases.

“A map is not the territory,” as Alfred Korzybski famously said. But for the music of the past, particularly music that is not notated, performances and whole genres that are not described by critics and memoirists, artists whose biographies are unknown to us now, the map—the body of recorded documentation—is all we have. Yet the map distorts: enlarging certain regions out of proportion, leaving others blank. It becomes crucial, then, if one wants to use the map to grasp the territory, that one know how the map was made, whom it was made for, what forces conditioned it, and what distortions were incorporated into it.

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II. RADIO PROGRAM GUIDES

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- 1934b "Oostersche muziek." *De N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1(5): 1, 27 May.
- 1934c "Uitzendingen ten behoeve van Oosterche luisteraars." *De N.I.R.O.M.-Bode* 1(8): 4–5, 8 July. [Includes Indonesian translation of 1934b.]
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- 1936b *Pewarta V.O.R.O.* 2[16], 2–15 August.
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- 1939a "Verslag pendek." *Pewartar V.O.R.O.* 5(6): 1, 16–31 March.
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- 1937b "Succes-Nirom." *Soeara Nirom* 4(2): 4, 16–31 January.
- 1937c "Berita Nirom." *Soeara Nirom* 4(17): 4–5, 22 Augustus–4 September.
- 1937d "Pemberitahoean daripada Raad van Advies tentang Siaran Radio Nirom." *Soeara Nirom* 4(17): 5–6, 22 August–September.
- 1937e "Taman kesenian." *Soeara Nirom* 4(23): 4–5, 14–27 November.
- 1937f "Siratoer' rohmi." *Soeara Nirom* 4(24):4–9, 28 November–11 December.
- 1938a *Soeara Nirom* 5(1): 9, 9–22 January.
- 1938b "Taman kesenian." *Soeara Nirom* 5(4): 5–6, 20 February–5 March.
- 1938c "Taman sandiwara." *Soeara Nirom* 5(15):6, 24 July–6 August.
- 1939a "Taman kesenian." *Soeara Nirom* 6(6): 7–9, 19–31 March.
- 1939b "Berita Nirom." *Soeara-Nirom* 6(12): 2–3, 11–24 June.
- 1939c "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 6(16):4, 6–19 August.
- 1939d "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 6(22): 2–3, 22 October–11 November.
- 1939e "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 6(23):4, 12–25 November.
- 1939f "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 6(24): 2–3, 26 November–9 December.
- 1940a "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(1): 2–3, 7 January.
- 1940b "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(3): 2–3, 21 January.
- 1940c "Taman kesenian." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(7): 2–3, 18 February.
- 1940d "Taman boenga Nirom." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(15): 1, 14 April.
- 1940e "Programma siaran-timoer Nirom." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(29): 1, 21 July.
- 1940f "Jang penting seminggoe ini!" *Soeara-Nirom* 7(32): 2–3, 11 August.
- 1940g "Jang penting seminggoe ini!" *Soeara-Nirom* 7(34):4–5, 25 Augustus 1940.
- 1940h "Jang penting seminggoe ini!" *Soeara-Nirom* 7(36): 2–3, 8 September.
- 1940i "Pemoeda kita dan radio." *Soeara-Nirom* 7(39): 1, 29 September.

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- 1940–1941 Algadrie, Hamid. "P.P.R.K. dan keboedajaan Indonesia." *Soeara Timoer* 1(1): 2, 28 [recte 29] December 1940–11 January 1941.
- 1941 Soetardjo. "Pidato Ketoera P.P.R.K. Toean M. Soetardjo pada pemboekaän malam 'Kesenian Timoer' di Stadsschouwburg, pada tanggal 11 Januari 1941." *Soeara Timoer* 1(3): 2, 26 January.

1942 "Poesparagam." *Soeara Timoer* 2(2): 1, 8 February.

III. DEI NEWSPAPER ARTICLES (UNSIGNED)

Darmo-Kondo [Surakarta]

1934a "Solosche Radio Vereeniging." *Darmo-Kondo*, 31 January. [Fourth and final installment of "Solosche Radio Vereeniging: pemboekaan officieel oleh bestuur," which begins in the issue of 26 January 1934.]

1934b "Solosche Radio-Vereeniging: Pidato dari voorzitter toean Ir. R. M. Sarsito pada tg. 1 April 1934 dimoeka micropoon." *Darmo-Kondo*, 3 April.

Hong Po [Batavia]

1940 "Pidatonja toean M. Soetardjo: Penjiaran Radio berarti menanem dan mengidoepken Keboedaja'an Timoer. Toedjoeannja P.P.R.K.: goena kemadjoennja bangsa Timoer di Indonesia." *Hong Po*, 6 November.

Persamaan [Padang]

1940 "Bagaimanakah perhoeboengan P.P.R.K. dengan Nirom?" *Persamaan*, 9 September.

Pewartar-Deli [Medan]

1940 "Lagoe-lagoe Timoer siaran Nirom." *Pewartar-Deli*, 8 February.

Pewartar Soerabaia [Surabaya]

1938a "Lagi Oostersche omroep." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 14 November.

1938b "Lagoe-lagoe timoer dan penoeroenan omroep-bijdrage." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 3 December.

1939 "Annie Landow [*sic*]: satoe zangers [*sic*] jang paling populair sekarang." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 30 September.

1940a "Kenapa penjiaran P.P.R.K. djelek." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 25 November.

1940b "Soerat kiriman: P.P.R.K. dan penjiaran Nirom." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 29 November.

1940c "Soerat terboeka: P.P.R.K. roesoeh?" *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 18 December.

1941a "Siaran P.P.R.K. dalem tiga boelan: Apakah P.P.R.K. mampoe mengatoer siaran katimoeran?" *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 30 January.

1941b "Protest terhadap P.P.R.K. mendapet reactie." *Pewartar Soerabaia*, 6 June.

Sin Tit Po [Surabaya]

1938 "Rapat oemoem dari Radio-Bezitters." *Sin Tit Po*, 30 August.

Sinar Pasoendan [Bandung]

1937a "Plaat gramofoon revolutionair." *Sinar Pasoendan*, 27 January.

1937b "Plaat gramofoon revolutionair tea." *Sinar Pasoendan*, 29 January.

Soeara 'Oemoem [Surabaya]

1939 "Nirom dan pendengar bangsa Tionghoa: haroes diadakan Nirom III." *Soeara 'Oemoem*,
22 March.