

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**MUSIC AND MASS COMMUNICATION: A STUDY  
OF M. NASIR AND MODERN MALAY MUSIC**

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the evolution of modern Malay music in Malaysia with reference to the person of M. Nasir. Such a study is relatively new in the Malaysian context. This study sees that the time has come to seriously investigate the various dimensions and implications of this aspect of popular culture through a socio-historical and a biographical approach. Hence, the study was divided into two parts: the first part surveys the development and evolution of music from a socio-historical perspective; while the second part examines the roles of M. Nasir in influencing the path of Malay popular music. It also made reference to ideas that have influenced M. Nasir and which in turn was seen to be reflected in his music. This study can be seen as an attempt to sketch a biography of the person as composer, singer and artist. From such an investigation, we can conclude that there is much more than what seems to be merely entertainment. Modern Malay popular music, like the Rock genres of the 1960s and '70s, reflect the mood of political and social life of the times. To some extent, it embodies a certain outlook in social criticism, a search for meaning, and a form of political protest.

## Abstrak

*Pengajian ini menjurus kepada evolusi muzik Melayu moden di Malaysia dengan M. Nasir sebagai rujukan. Pengajian ini boleh dianggap baru di Malaysia. Disini dapat dilihat bahawa masanya telah tiba untuk pengkajian yang mendalam terhadap kepelbagaian dimensi dan implikasi mengenai budaya popular melalui sosio-sejarah dan pendekatan biographi. Pengajian ini telah dibahagikan kepada dua bahagian: bahagian pertama mengkaji perkembangan muzik dari perspektif sosio-sejarah; sementara bahagian kedua melihat kepada peranan M. Nasir didalam perjalanan muzik popular Melayu. Ia juga merujuk kepada idea-idea yang mempengaruhi M. Nasir yang kemudiannya di tafsirkan melalui muzik beliau. Pengajian ini boleh dilihat sebagai percubaan untuk menghasilkan biographi individu yang digelar pencipta, penyanyi dan artis. Daripada kajian yang dijalankan, dapat disimpulkan bahawa muzik itu bukanlah hanya bersifat hiburan. Muzik Melayu moden, seperti genre Rock di sekitar tahun 1960-an dan 70-an, mencerminkan keadaan politik dan sosial semasa. Ia juga turut dikaitkan sebagai pengkritik sosial dan protes terhadap ketidakadilan politik.*

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# INTRODUCTION CHAPTER

## Rationale

This thesis has a combination study of several subjects such as music, mass communication, history and popular culture<sup>1</sup>. This combination of study has been discussed in international level, but in Malaysia we are not having this kind of study especially in wider scope. Since our music industry are mostly dominated by the publications that only focusing on the popular side of artist, in this thesis I discussed things that are rarely been seen in popular media. The study involved topics and issues that are not really been discussed or interviewed by the popular media. It cannot be denied that the fact some of the issues and topics here might also be musically inclined, but I strongly believed that most of the issues here are given different approaches.

M. Nasir is a local artist that has been in the local music industry for such a long period of time. I try to study and examine his thoughts and opinions on several topics such politics, globalization, media and entertainment from the artist point of view. This thesis is also about a biographical documentation for M. Nasir because it includes all of his journey and struggle in arts.

One might asked why I choose M. Nasir for this study. First and foremost, the answer is because of the endurance that he has in this entertainment industry. It is very hard to find such artists that can still standing in the local music industry for a long period of time. M. Nasir on the other hand, had proved that he can still survive and had been in this local music industry for more than 20 years. Besides, he is a very versatile

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis can be considered as the first attempt to write deeply on those inter-discipline combine. The combination of music, culture and society already been written locally by few authors especially in traditional music. This thesis focuses on modern popular music with the combination of mass communication, culture, society and history.