

A BASIC STUDY OF THE GRUMONG MUSIC IN MELANAU KAUL FESTIVAL



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5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

The overall aim of this research is to determine the role and function of the *grumong* music used during the Kaul festival. This includes the context of performance practice and technique of the music. The methodology applied consists of review on the existing literature which related to the Melanau community, observation on performance during the ritual ceremony, interview sessions with various members of the communities and audio/visual documentation. Result indicates the *grumong* music ensemble was used to accompany the *Serahang* to the river mouth for the ritual ceremony. The existence of other races' influences in the musical setting which resulted the assimilation in musical instruments used. By the end of this research, the outcome of the study should allow the preservation, conservation, documentation and transmission of the *grumong* music in order to prevent the decline of the music among the newer generation of this community.

5.3 Introduction

Kaul is one of the most important ceremonies celebrated by the Melanaus each year. According to Yasir (1987), Kaul was one of ritual ceremonies which are still practiced until this day and the purpose of having this event is to cleanse the village from bad influences and uninvited spirit. In the past, most of the Melanau people practiced animism and believed in supernatural forces. Datuk Aidan Wing (2012) stated that the Melanau believe every single object exist in this world has its own power and spirit.

In the past, Kaul has many taboos to be observed. This is to avoid unwanted things to happen. The Melanau people believe that humans are surrounded by the good and evil spirits everywhere. Jeniri (2001) mentioned that the spirit which is the powerful one is believed to be the sea spirit and it is also known as *Ipo'Kala*. It dominates the estuaries and marine areas. *Likou* Melanaus also believe that the well-being and livelihood can be taken care of if the human beings are able to take good care of the sea spirit. According Kudet (2012), Kaul is normally held in the month of *Pengejin* which is the first month of the annual cycle of Melanau calendar. The ceremony is often held after the Chinese New Year.

In the ritual ceremony, the music was played to escort the Serahaeng to the river mouth. The music played is identified as the *Agut-agut* rhythm. According to Datuk Aidan Wing (2012), its function is believed to attract the evil spirits out of the village and celebrate the ceremony with food offering and some other activities. In 1998, Kaul has become a festival for the Melanaus to generate their incomes.