

E-BOOK OF EXTENDED ABSTRACT

THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL INVENTION, INNOVATION & DESIGN COMPETITION 2025



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TIMBRE OF ARTISTRY: INNOVATIVE MUSICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE BLUE MOSQUE

Raja Mohamad Alif Raja Mohamad Adnan, Annastasia Natasha Nofian, Hasya Nur Ain
Shah Nizam, Muhammad Aqil Ghazali, Putera Adika Budiman Asmadi

Faculty of Music, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam

E-mail: rajaalif7259@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This project-based research examines the Blue Mosque Shah Alam in Malaysia through the creation of four original musical work. Five composers under the leadership of the project leader (lecturer) collaborated to musicify some architectural and temporal aspects namely the dome, construction period, interior, and four minarets. The methodology involved visual analysis, secondary research, and field audio recording to inform the composition process. Sonification processes were applied to convert visual data, structural data, and experiential factors into musical parameters such as melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, and spatialization. Findings reveal innovative sonic translations of each element of the mosque: the dome's shape dictating musical texture and stability; the construction chronology unfolding as a story musical form; the interior spatial properties and patterns informing sonic textures and melodic contours; and the minarets' characteristics translated as key signatures, instruments, and dynamic contrasts. These pieces introduce a fresh aesthetic encounter with the Blue Mosque, validating the potential of music as an architectural appreciation instrument and as an interdisciplinarity method for understanding culture. This project offers a new voice to understanding the way cultural landmarks are apprehended and understood through innovative audio descriptions.

Keyword: Blue Mosque Shah Alam, Musical Composition, Sonification, Architectural Interpretation, Cultural Heritage.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Blue Mosque in Shah Alam, Malaysia, an architectural and cultural landmark, serves as the inspiration for this practice-based research. This study explores its identity through four distinct musical compositions. This interdisciplinary approach, drawing on both architectural study and music composition, offers a novel way to engage with cultural heritage. Each composition focuses on a specific aspect: the central dome, its construction history, the serene interior, and its iconic minarets. By translating the mosque's visual, historical, and acoustic elements into sound, this project seeks to provide new perspectives on architectural appreciation and expand the ways in which cultural symbols can be understood and experienced through artistic mediums (Kusno et al., 2022). The resulting compositions aim to offer listeners an evocative experience and contribute to the scholarly exploration of architectural narratives through creative practice (Marry, 2011). This extended abstract outlines the collaborative process and anticipates the insights from these musical interpretations.

2. METHODOLOGY

This practice-based research focuses on creating four musical compositions that explore specific elements of the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque, the Blue Mosque in Shah Alam. Guided by a multi-modal strategy, the project begins with visual observation of key features: the dome, structural timeline, interior, and minarets. This close observation informs the researcher's understanding of the mosque's architectural and cultural significance, while influencing its musical interpretation (Holakooei & Karimy, 2024).

Complementing visual analysis, secondary online research gathers factual and contextual information about the mosque's history and architecture, providing a broader perspective. A site visit to the Blue Mosque allowed composers to experience its physical and sonic environment, resulting in audio recordings for the compositions' fixed media elements. These recordings capture the mosque's unique acoustics and enrich the musical interpretations. The creative phase involves developing musical ideas from this gathered material, refined through iterative composition using DAWs (Mokhtar, 2024). Structured internal feedback sessions enable composers to refine their work. This extended abstract documents the research process and artistic intentions, highlighting the innovative intersection of architecture and music in exploring cultural heritage.

3. FINDINGS

These four musical compositions sonically interpret the Blue Mosque Shah Alam, using sonification to convert visual, conceptual, and structural data into sound.

3.1 *Kubah* (The Dome): Centered on a key, an ambient drone mirrors the dome's presence. Dome dash quantity determines instrumental texture and harmonic stability. Ornamentation influences timbre, melody, symmetry, and activity. The upward slope is represented by ascending music.

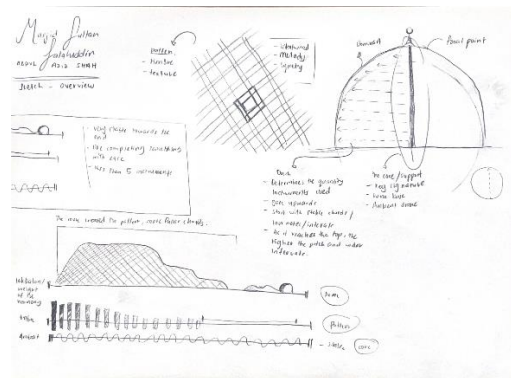


Figure 1 Pre-compositional sketch of *Kubah* (The Dome)

3.2 *Creation in Blue* (The Construction Timeline): This piece sonically narrates the mosque's construction. "1980 - Planning" is a lone sound. "1983 - Construction" is a busy, ascending soundscape, subtly incorporating other themes. Minaret tips are al niente/dal niente; arches are bar lines; fleurons are 4/4/2/4 rhythms. "Completed Mosque" is a resolved, beautiful conclusion.

4. CONCLUSION

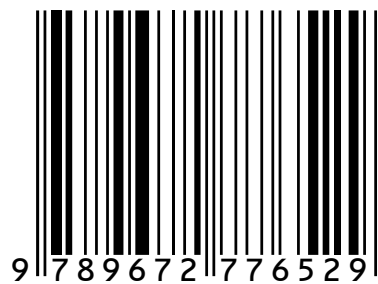
This practice-based study successfully transcribed the Blue Mosque Shah Alam's architectural, historical, and atmospheric elements into four distinct musical pieces. By applying a continuous visual analysis, search for information, on-site aural listening, and collaborative composition, each piece offers a new sonic experience of the mosque dome, building construction, interior, and minarets. The findings indicate the effectiveness of sonification in directly translating abstract information and visual concepts into musical parameters, thereby foregrounding the rich structural-sonic interlinks. This inter-arts project foregrounds music composition as an innovative method for the appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage, presenting evocative sound experience that suggests new ways for the experience of architectural landmarks and their access to meaning. The outcomes of composition are both works of art and new research results, bearing witness to the reflexive involvement of creative practice with the world.

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