

Towards a Performance of Tazul Izan Tajuddin's *Kabus Pantun* (2018)

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ABSTRACT

Although research has been conducted on the musical compositions of Tazul Izan Tajuddin, the focus has mainly been on the musical analysis of the composition itself. Supporting material such as performance guidelines on how to perform Tazul's compositions effectively is lacking. This paper focuses on the performance guidelines on a solo piano work, Kabus Pantun (2018). As a newly commissioned work, the complexity of musical material presented in Kabus Pantun appears to suggest that different playing techniques are required. Studying music of this "experimental" kind, where playing techniques owe little or nothing to the techniques of traditional repertoire, forces one to rethink one's approach to learning and practice; a performer may need to find alternative strategies to perform these contemporary pieces effectively, particularly in the execution of the notes. Encapsulated within Tazul's Kabus Pantun (2018), this article also attempts to elucidate how John Rink's idea of a performer's creative process can contribute to the preparation of a performance on works that push pianistic possibilities to the limit, if not beyond.

Keywords: *Tazul Izan Tajuddin, Kabus Pantun, piano solo work, playing techniques, John Rink*

INTRODUCTION

In comparison to the solo piano repertoires of Western classical music, there is less emphasis on the performance of Malaysian-inspired works. One of the possible reasons for this is the popularity of the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (ABRSM) among the piano students and teachers in Malaysia. Since 1948, the ABRSM has established itself as one of the leading music examination boards in Malaysia with over one million candidates enrolled in the examinations (Ross 2002). In observing the music syllabus of the ABRSM, one could easily determine that most of the pieces chosen for the examination are from the Western classical music repertoire.¹ A publication of contemporary works for solo piano edited by Thalia Myers, *Spectrum 4: An International Collection of 66 Miniatures for Solo Piano* (2005) includes two Malaysian composers' works – *Sebuah Pantun* by Tazul Izan Tajuddin and *Mind the Gap* by Adeline Wong – as part of its anthology. However, supporting materials such as performance guidelines on how to perform these works effectively, in particular the execution of the notes, is lacking. This issue exacerbates due to the limited understanding or knowledge among piano students and teachers in performing Malaysian-inspired works.

In addition to these challenges, different playing techniques are required in order to perform these Malaysian contemporary works. When approaching and studying music of this "experimental" kind, techniques of playing owe little or nothing to the techniques of traditional repertoire, forcing one to rethink one's approach to learning and practice (Hill 2002). For example, a glance at Malaysian piano solo works such as *Etudes* (2009) by Razak Abdul-Aziz, *Metamorphosis III* (2001) by Chong Kee Yong, *A Distant Voice of the Rainforest* (2008, revised 2009–2010) by Ng Chong Lim and *Sebuah Pantun* (2002) by Tazul Izan Tajuddin, reveals that one needs to begin to see "technique" in a more creative perspective. Instead of applying a standard formula, playing contemporary music encourages one to seek the solutions that work, regardless of how unorthodox they may be (Hill 2002). In short, a performer will need to find alternative strategies to perform these contemporary pieces effectively, especially in the execution of notes using different playing techniques.

MALAYSIAN CONTEMPORARY ART MUSIC: PIANO SOLO WORKS

Although research has been conducted on contemporary Malaysian art music (Siagian 2007; Lie 2013; Gan 2014; Khoo 2014), emphasis has mainly been placed on the historical development and musical analysis of the compositions. Siagian's dissertation (2007) provides an introduction to contemporary solo piano works by seven Malaysian and Indonesian composers, which includes Tazul's *Torrent of Images* (2003–2005). Lie's article (2013) in *Wacana Seni (Journal of Arts Discourse)* analyses the compositional styles of Mohd Yazid Zakaria, Ng Chong Lim, Teh Tze Siew and Yii Kah Hoe. On the other hand, Khoo (2014) offers an overview of the development of Malaysian contemporary art music in her doctoral research project, with an extensive musical analysis on selected solo piano works by Ng Chong Lim, Adeline Wong and Yii Kah Hoe. Although Gan's article (2014) in the *Malaysian Music Journal* details Tazul's works, the investigation focuses on the relationship between Tazul's use of cultural confluence and compositional strategies. As Gan observes:

Malaysian contemporary music, an emerging and highly diverse art form, has rapidly gained recognition nationally in Malaysia and internationally, over the last decade. Many Malaysian composers have studied abroad and have established music careers prior to returning to Malaysia. It is their return that has served as a catalyst for the growth of Malaysian contemporary music. (Gan 2014:13)

A majority of Malaysian composers who have composed solo piano works are members of the Society of Malaysian Contemporary Composers (SMCC).² Their works show that Malaysian composers can be traditional and experimental, national and international at the same time, reflecting common aspirations to include and maintain qualities and sounds that define these composers' identities or cultural origins, that are not necessarily determined merely by ethnicity or nationality. These aspirations are achieved through the assimilation of foreign knowledge and techniques with localised influences and inspirations. For instance, Ng Chong Lim's *A Distant Voice from the Rainforest* (2008, revised 2009–2010) strongly evokes the numerous sounds found in Malaysia's rainforest (Transcription 1). Originally titled *Rimba*, *A Distant Voice of Rainforest* was first composed for 14 musicians, comprising two groups

of string quartets, three woodwinds, one pianist and two percussionists. It premiered at the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra's Forum for Malaysian Composers in 2007. Subsequently, the piece was reworked and commissioned as one of the compulsory repertoires for the first stage of the concerto categories at the 5th ASEAN International Chopin Piano Competition 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *A Distant Voice of Rainforest* is based on gamelan modes and has been written such that the player has the freedom to choose the order of the musical materials to be performed. As Ng stated, "I always like freedom in music... Players can create their own music. Everyone can play it differently".³

In *A Distant Voice of Rainforest*, Ng utilises a more improvisatory style; a pianist is able to choose to begin the piece with any of the musical material presented in the score (see Transcription 1, Boxes 1 to 10). As such, the order of the musical material need not necessarily begin chronologically from Box 1 to Box 10 or vice versa. The pianist could choose randomly from any of the boxes based on his or her musical narrative. In a 2017 recording of *A Distant Voice of Rainforest* performed by Malaysian concert pianist, Yoh Hao Zi, at Charlton House in London,⁴ the piece appears to allow the pianist space to improvise certain physical gestures and movements including singing alongside extended techniques such as tapping the lid of the piano, plucking its strings and so on. All these extra musical ideas echo what Ng had notated in the score regarding the importance of having "spontaneity and intuition" when performing his piece.

Likewise, Tazul composed his pieces based on localised inspirations. His instrumental works including *Tenunan II* (2001) was composed for flute, celesta, piano, percussion and string orchestra, while *Sebuah Pantun* (2002), for solo piano, reflects cultural elements of the Malay people in Malaysia.⁵ In order to gain a deeper understanding of his solo piano works, the following section will provide a brief musical background of Tazul Izan Tajuddin and highlight his complete solo piano works. This will be followed by an analysis of Tazul's performance guidelines on his newly commissioned work, *Kabus Pantun* (2018), which is based on John Rink's concept of the creative role of performers in making sense of the musical materials during performance (Rink 2015).

Brief Biography of Tazul Izan Tajuddin

Born into a Malay family in Banting, Selangor, Malaysia, Tazul received his Bachelor of Music from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM) in 1991. In 1996, a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture of Malaysia supported his Master's in music composition studies with Leonardo Balada and Reza Vali at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States. Subsequently, the composer was awarded another scholarship to further his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in composition with Michael Finnissy and Martin Butler at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, in 2002. There, Tazul also had the opportunity to study composition with Jonathan Harvey, Franco Donatoni and Brian Ferneyhough.

Tazul is a multi-award recipient, which includes first prize at the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2002 in Japan as well as the Lutoslawski Composition Award 2005 in Poland. His musical style is inspired by Asian cultures, particularly Malaysian and Indonesian decorative and visual arts, gamelan music and Islamic geometrical patterns, which are combined with multi-cultural contemporary ideals. The *Arabesque*, *Tenunan*, *Mediasi Ukiran* and *Gamelbati* cycles,⁶ for instance, are inspired by the concept of woven sound, resulting in texture-based compositions or "sound fabric". The use of a "pattern-based" technique would become Tazul's signature compositional strategy, as observed by Gan (2014). The "pattern-based" compositional strategy is also found in his other piano solo works, including the *Kabus Pantun*.

Tazul Izan Tajuddin's Solo Piano Works

Tazul's piano works showcase the development of his compositional approach, which ranges from the conventional to the avant-garde. Early works such as *Sketch for Piano* (1994) were composed during the composer's Master studies at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States. Several interview sessions with Tazul (*pers. comm.*, 26th January 2018; 9th March 2018) reveal that *Sketch for Piano* was inspired by composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953). In particular, musical works such as *Piano Concerto No. 2* (1930–1931), *Strings Quartet* (1909–1939), *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943, revised 1945) and *Cantata Profana* (1930) by Bartok, as well as the piano sonatas by Prokofiev, inspired Tazul to compose *Sketch for Piano*.

However, *Scherzo* (1993) and *Etude* (1995) shows a different musical style where the twelve-tone technique was utilised. *Scherzo* is a relatively short piece, composed during Tazul's stint in the United States during which a short idea or theme was provided by his lecturer. In 2002, Tazul moved to the United Kingdom to further his doctoral studies (PhD in Composition) at the University of Sussex. The valuable guidance provided by his teachers including Michael Finnissy and Brian Ferneyhough (The Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music [IRCAM Academie d'ete], France: 2001) further influenced his compositional approach. Subsequently, other piano works such as *Sebuah Pantun* (2002), *Torrent of Images* (2003–2005), which consists of three substantial movements (*Irrational*, *Mediasi Masa* and *Mediasi Corakan Warna*), as well as the *Kabus Pantun* (2018), demonstrates another dimension of his compositional style where emphasis is placed on the structure and sound of gamelan cipher notation that is pattern-based.

***Kabus Pantun* (2018)**

In the process of preparing the performance guidelines on *Kabus Pantun* (2018), it should be noted that the performance approach shown in this article was influenced by Rink's idea of "structural potentialities within musical materials and then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance" (Rink 2015: 129), which entails four principles of possibility:

1. Musical materials do not in themselves constitute structure(s): they afford the inference of structural relationships.
2. Inference of this kind will be individually and uniquely carried out whenever it is attempted, even if shared criteria result in commonalities between discrete structural representations.
3. Musical structure should therefore be seen as constructed, not immanent; as pluralistic, not singular.

4. Furthermore, because of music's time-dependency, musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as "architecture" – especially in relation to performance. (Rink 2015: 129)

Although Chopin's *Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, No. 6*, was used as a case study in Rink's idea of structural possibilities,⁷ it could be argued that Rink's idea of the performer's creative role could extend to one's approach in performing avant-garde repertoire, despite possessing a different musical conceptualisation. For instance, the atonal quality of works by Stockhausen (*Klavierstück*), Xenakis (*Herma*) and even works by Tazul (*Sebuah Pantun* or *Kabus Pantun*) requires a performer to focus on different aspects such as identifying musical motifs or gestures, rhythmic patterns, extreme dynamics markings and recognising the geographical feels of the keyboard including the sense of different registral ranges; what Rink termed the embodiment and diachronic flow (Rink 2015: 129). In turn, this would form part of an attempt to articulate and document what was occurring within the music and how a performer would react to it.

Kabus Pantun, composed in 2018, is the last movement from Tazul's collection of short pieces for solo piano entitled *Kabus-Kabus Memori*. It consists of six individual pieces (*Sebuah Pantun*, *Meditasi Lagu dalam Mimpi*, *A Tango Waltz*, *Pantun: Rawak*, *Meditasi dalam Mimpi V* and *Kabus Pantun*), where some comprise Tazul's revisited works. In notes Tazul provided, he stated that:

Time here is past memories, clouds that shrouded the memories, some are clear and some are misty. This collection is a shred of this memory. As human time is one's own moment and past memories are preserved but no memories of the future exist except imagined or predicted one.

Kabus Pantun is derived from Tazul's *Pantun* cycle that utilise gamelan numbering that is transformed into sounds and notes. The piece is constructed within four sections, representing the four verses of the Malay *pantun*. In the beginning of the first section (Transcription 2), the use of extended techniques such as muting the low F string inside the piano with the voice sound on "K" (indicated in the score by X noteheads) is considerably challenging.

According to the composer, the balance between the voice sound of "K" and the hitting of the muted low F should be adjusted accordingly. For instance, some pianos may have greater resonances on the low strings and thus could easily mute the voice sound of "K", or on other occasions, the tone projection of the piano would be thinner than the voice sound.

Another consideration in addressing this piece is the overall intensity that decreases from beginning to end. One can observe this from the tempo markings – Verse 1: Crotchet = 106, Verse 2: Crotchet = 96, Verse 3: Crotchet = 76 and Verse 4: Crotchet = 56. These four verses evoke different characters in themselves; the intensity of the musical material shown in Verse 1 requires a pianist to produce not only the voice sound of "K", but also a whispering sound while playing the notes at the same time (as shown in Transcriptions 3 and 4). The arrow shown in Transcriptions 3 and 4 indicates that a performer needs to sustain the whispering sound while playing the notes, slowly fading away before the arrival of the next musical idea.

The image shows a musical transcription for the first section of *Kabus Pantun*. At the top, it indicates a tempo of $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 106$. A box labeled "1" and "VERSE 1" is positioned above the first measure. The music is written for piano and voice. The piano part consists of two staves in bass clef. The first staff has a note with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and a performance instruction "with voice smack sound". The second staff has a note with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and a performance instruction "mute inside piano". A bracket labeled "Piano" spans both staves. The voice part is represented by a single note with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and a performance instruction "k".

Transcription 2 Section figure 1 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

Transcription 3 Section figure 3 of *Kabus Pantun*.

Source: Tazul (2018).

Transcription 4 Section figure 8 of *Kabus Pantun*.

Source: Tazul (2018).

The frequent appearance of acciaccaturas in Verse 2 section (Transcriptions 5 and 6) suggests that the musical intensity remains; thus, the sense of attack could be quicker for all notes. However, different articulation markings such as the accent and staccato also provide the pianist a hint regarding the different levels of attack on the notes.

2

♩ = ca. 96 still intense, dramatic

19 VERSE 2

20

Pno

Transcription 5 Section figure 19 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

22

28

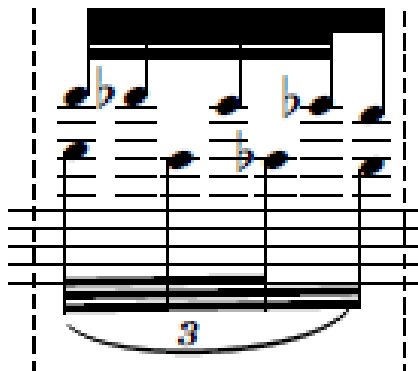
Pno

Transcription 6 Section figure 22 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

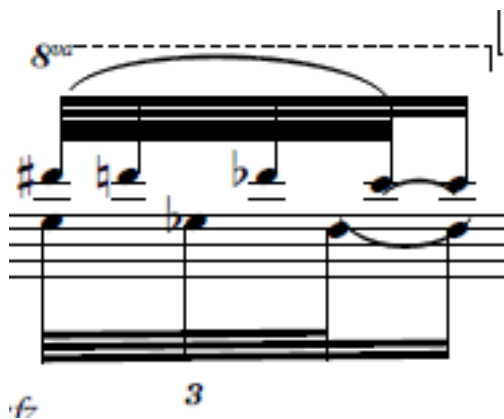
Verse 3 shows another technical challenge for a pianist to overcome, particularly the rapid shift between the low and high registers of the keyboard. As shown in Transcriptions 7, 8 and 9, these shifts are suggested mappings of the musical material where a pianist could consider the following: the musical material presented in Transcription 7 could be identified as Musical Gesture A, Transcription 8 as Musical Gesture B and Transcription 9 as Musical Gesture C. All three musical gestures⁸ are built into a chromatic scalar passage. In identifying the differences between them, a pianist may remember the first note and the end note of each gesture:



Transcription 7 Musical Gesture A: Right hand (R.H.) A-sharp and left hand (L.H.) A, finish with an E-flat on R.H. and E on L.H.



Transcription 8 Musical Gesture B: R.H. on E and L.H. on F, ends with C on R.H. and D on L.H.
Musical Gesture C.



Transcription 9 Musical Gesture C: R.H. on D-sharp and L.H. on E, ends with C on R.H. and D on L.H.

An example of the mapping of these three musical gestures in Verse 3 is shown in Transcription 10.

The identification of the musical gestures throughout Verse 3 echoes the first conceptual framework provided by Rink where "musical materials do not in themselves constitute structure(s): they afford the inference of structural relationships" (Rink 2015: 129). That is, these musical gestures (in Rink's term, the musical material) provide an alternative strategy to a performer in making sense of the overall musical flow of a particular section.

In Verse 4, the tempo marking (Crotchet = ca.56, flowingly) suggests that a performer adopts a slower pulsation, which is indicated by the musical expression of the dialogue between the two musical lines. Consisting of five different phrases, the dialogue between the two lines gradually descends from the high register to the low register of the piano. The diagram in Figure 1 shows the geographical feeling of the descent from the high to low registers on the piano keyboard.

The image displays a musical score for piano, divided into three systems. The first system (measures 33-39) is labeled 'Musical Gesture A' and 'Musical Gesture B'. The second system (measures 40-43) is labeled 'Musical Gesture C'. The third system (measures 44-48) is labeled 'Musical Gesture A', 'Musical Gesture C', and 'Musical Gesture A'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (sf, mf, mp, sfz). Annotations include measure numbers in boxes (33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48) and specific musical gestures highlighted with boxes and labels. The piano part is indicated by 'Pno' at the bottom of each system.

Transcription 10 Mapping of the three musical gestures in Verse 3.

Musical Gesture A

Musical Gesture A

44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53

Piano

Musical Gesture C

Musical Gesture C

54 55 56 57

Piano

58 59 60 61 62

Piano

Musical Gesture C

Musical Gesture C

63 64 65

Piano

66 67 68

Piano

Musical Gesture C

69 70 71 72

Piano

Transcription 10 (continued)

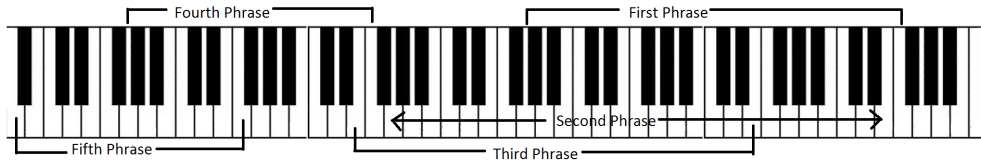


Figure 1 The descending feeling on the keyboard from the First Phrase to the Fifth Phrase.

As noted earlier, this transcription is one that demonstrates Rink's idea of "how the unfolding music feels to the performer – that is, how it is embodied – is a key element of both the performance experience and the music's ontology", which includes an "understanding [of the] music in terms of its embodiment and diachronic flow" (Rink 2015: 129). This statement also reflects the fourth principle of Rink's idea where "musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as 'architecture' – especially in relation to performance" (Rink 2015: 129). The following discussion will suggest how a pianist might address the musical materials presented in each phrase of Verse 4.

First Phrase

Transcription 11 Section figure 73–74 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

The First Phrase (Transcription 11) is written in the high register of the keyboard, starting with the D-sharp played by the right hand and followed by the overlapping of the left hand on F. A performer may need to consider the balance between the loudness of the attacks as well as the resonance of the note, particularly when the right hand plays the acciaccatura on F and the left hand continues sustaining E (Transcription 12).

Other considerations in the balancing of the tone resonance occur when sustaining the G-sharp on the right hand that needs to cede to the left hand to execute the same note. Subsequently, the tied F as well as E also needs to cede for the execution of the notes (Transcription 13). The First Phrase ends with a strong accent (*sfz*) on a pair of notes for both hands (G–A).

The image shows a musical score for piano (Pno) and celeste (Cel.). The right hand (Pno) part starts at measure 58 with a melodic line. A triplet of notes is circled in black, and an arrow points from this triplet down to the corresponding notes in the left hand (Cel.). The tempo is marked 'ca. 56 flowingly' and the dynamics are 'mp'. The section is labeled 'VERSE 4' and '73'.

Transcription 12 Section figure 73 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

Transcription 13 Section figure 74 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

Second Phrase

Transcription 14 Section figure 75–76 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

The previous material is expanded to a longer succession of notes, especially in the right hand part, which consists of a scalar passage (E – D-sharp – C – B-flat – A – G-sharp – F – E, see Transcription 14). The difference occurs at the end of this phrase, where the dynamics marking is *sfp* compared to the previous *sfz* of the First Phrase. As a means of understanding the musical implications, a performer may choose to focus on the accumulating sound produced by continuous pedalling as well as the tone projection in the lower registral range in comparison to the first phrase.

Third Phrase

The image shows a musical transcription for piano (Pno) of a section from 'Kabus Pantun'. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. Measure 77 (boxed) shows a scalar passage in the right hand (E4-D#4-C4-Bb4-A4-G#4-F4-E4) and a similar passage in the left hand. Measure 78 (boxed) continues the scalar passage in both hands. Dynamics markings include *mf* and *sfz*. Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

Transcription 15 Section figure 77–78 of *Kabus Pantun*.

Source: Tazul (2018).

The overlapping of both hands continue to occur in this phrase where the previous scalar passage (E – D-sharp – C – B-flat – A – G-sharp – F – E) is played using both hands this time (Transcription 15). The sense of the keyboard geography is centralised, with the ending of similar pair-notes (G-A) at the same position for both hands.

Fourth Phrase

The image shows a musical transcription for the Fourth Phrase of Kabus Pantun, covering measures 79 and 80. The score is written in bass clef and includes piano (Pno) and forte (sf) markings. It features complex rhythmic patterns with slurs and fingerings (5 and 3) in both hands. The left hand starts with a dynamic marking of *mp* and ends with *sf*. The right hand starts with *sf* and ends with *sf*. The score is marked with measure numbers 79 and 80 in boxes. There are also measure numbers 66 and 67 visible on the left side of the staff.

Transcription 16 Section figure 79–80 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

The Fourth Phrase begins with the left hand E (Transcription 16), and the scalar passage from the previous phrase is inflected slightly at the end (notice the left hand G-sharp – F – A – G-sharp and right hand C – D-sharp – F – E). This phrase appears to emphasise the repetition of two notes (E and F); the left hand moves downward to the pair-notes (G–A) in the lower register of the keyboard, with the dynamics marking of *sfp*. One of the considerations in executing all these low notes is that a performer may need a different sense of touch, such that the motivic idea of E–F is more clearly projected.

This last phrase is adapted to the lowest register of the keyboard, with the last appearance of the scalar passage on the right hand. The sustained, "open" pedal suggests a creation of full sonority and is resounded throughout this phrase before concluding with the pair-notes motive (G–A for right hand and B–A for left hand) on the lowest keys of the keyboard.

Fifth Phrase

The image shows a musical score for the Fifth Phrase of *Kabus Pantun*, covering measures 81 and 82. The score is written for piano (Pno) and consists of two staves. Measure 81 begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes, some beamed together. There are slurs over the notes, and a '6' is written above a group of notes in measure 81. Measure 82 starts with a dynamic marking of *sfp* (sforzando piano) and continues with similar rhythmic complexity. A '5' is written above a group of notes in measure 82. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Transcription 17 Section figure 81–82 of *Kabus Pantun*.
Source: Tazul (2018).

CONCLUSION

In preparing the performance of Tazul's *Kabus Pantun* (2018), a pianist will find certain challenges. As Hill has observed, studying music of this "experimental" kind, where playing techniques owe little or nothing to the techniques of traditional repertoire, forces one to rethink one's approach to learning and practice. For example, a glance at *Kabus Pantun* (2018) by Tazul, demonstrates that one begins to see "technique" from a more creative perspective; instead of applying standard formulae, playing contemporary music encourages one to seek solutions that work for the pianist, regardless of how unorthodox it may be (Hill 2002). As such, a performer may need to find alternative strategies to perform these contemporary pieces effectively, focusing on the execution of the notes.

The discussion of a performer's creative process in preparing a performance of Tazul's *Kabus Pantun* (2018) includes the following considerations. First, the performer needs to establish a dynamic grasp of the musical structure by identifying musical motifs or gestures, rhythmic patterns, and so on. Second, the geographical feel of the keyboard adopts Rink's idea of "how the unfolding music feels to the performer – that is, how it is embodied – is a key element of both the performance experience and the music's ontology" (Rink 2015). This finding potentially equips the performer with a new understanding of how the different sense of registrars on the piano keyboard may impact the characterisation of music. Third, the

dynamic markings indicate what a performer needs to know regarding their precise purpose within the work.

By adopting Rink's idea of "structural potentialities within musical materials and then realising them as they see fit within the broader musical narrative of their performance" (Rink 2015: 129), this article seeks to expand this conceptual framework to piano works that explore the sonorous potentialities of the instrument. In preparing a performance of such a work, in this instance Tazul's *Kabus Pantun* (2018), performers do not seek scientific explanations while formulating understandings of musical works or while perceptually engaging with performance processes related to experiencing the music. Instead, a performer will attempt to identify the potential elements of the work that need to be shaped during a performance. Potential elements include the musical shape, the physical motion of shifting different registers of the keyboard, identifying different sense of attacks on the keys to achieve a specific tone or resonance, and much more. These performance considerations highlight the creative role of a performer takes in approaching pieces such as Tazul's *Kabus Pantun* (2018), which potentially possesses multiple identities in relation to its conceptualisation and issues of performance issues. Tazul's *Kabus Pantun* (2018) demonstrates that these identities need not necessarily be resolved in order for an effective performance to occur. A performative decision operated in combination to act upon performance-relevant matters allows the narrative experience to come to the fore. Such matters include the shape and timing of a musical event within a phrase, a phrase within a section, a section within the movement, and the momentum with which the musical tension is constructed towards an ultimate directional point. This experience encompasses the process of creating interpretative ownership of a work that develops from the potential of Tazul's instrumental music, which in turn is personalised through a variety of possibilities.

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NOTES

1. In recent years, ABRSM has included works by Asian composers, from China (Tan Dun, Zhang Zhao, Chow Shu Shan, Chen Pei Xun and Chu Wang Hua) and Japan (Toru Takemitsu and Karen Tanaka).
2. For more details, see <http://www.smccomposers.com/smcc-committee-members.html>.
3. Interview with Ng Chong Lim, a distinguished Malaysian pianist and composer, about the ideas on his musical compositions. For more details, please refer to this website: <http://classicalmusicasia.com/2012/11/07/composer-draws-inspiration-from-nature>
4. For the complete performance, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDUCQnl8dXU>.
5. Gan's article in *Malaysian Music Journal* shows how cultural elements such as batik were incorporated into Tazul's compositional approach, in particular *Tenunan II* where the composer stated that "*Tenunan* is a Malay word meaning weave. It is visually related to woven and printed patterns of textiles (which are known as *batik* in Malaysia and Indonesia). Even though technically *batik* is not woven, conceptually the piece (*Tenunan II*) is conceived as weaving which happens in the notation, in the process of composing and sound organization of one sound to another" (Gan 2014: 19).
6. Examples of the musical compositions from the cycles: *Arabesque IV – Tenunan VII for Solo Guitar* (2003), *Sebuah Tenunan III for Guitar Quartet* (2010), *Sebuah Tenunan IV for Violin, Cello and Piano* (2010–2011), *Mediasi Ukiran V – Tenunan XII for Flute, Clarinet, Violin and Cello* (2004), *Mediasi Ukiran – Tenunan VIII for String Quartet* (2004), *Sebuah Pantun VI for Oboe and Piano* (2013) and *Gamelbati III for String Quartet* (2005). For the complete list of works from the cycles, please refer to this website: <http://www.tazultajuddin.com/index.htm>.
7. John Rink's article focused on this particular work "because it has attracted so much attention in performance-analytical literature from the last few years" (Rink 2015: 130).

8. Musical gestures are grounded in human effect and its communication. These gestures are not merely the physical actions involved in producing a sound or series of sounds from a notated score, but the characteristic shaping that give these sounds expressive meaning (Hatten 2004: 93).

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