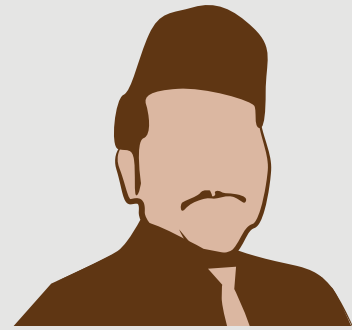


TRACING SINGAPORE HISTORY THROUGH MALAY MUSIC



OPERA FOR THE PEOPLE

Bangsawan, collectively known as Malay opera, a mix of theatre and live music drawn from diverse cultural sources was the most popular form of entertainment.

Streets around the Opera Estate area were named after popular *Bangsawan* titles, songs and artists. Eg, Jalan Terang Bulan, Terang Bulan Avenue, Jalan Bintang Tiga, Jalan Bangsawan and Jalan Khairuddin

Check Out:
Khairuddin or K Dean and Miss Tijah, *Bangsawan's* most popular couple.



THIS IS RADIO MALAYA!

Vinyl recordings were very popular in the 30s.

Radio broadcast, officially established in 1936, further cast the audience net wider. Radio broadcast was only available for a few hours a day.

Music over the radio was not pre-recorded but played live by the various bands or *orkes*.

The Malay music industry was prolific and thriving with many recordings by different international recording companies.

Check Out:
Ahmad Patek
Momo Latiff
R. Azmi

GOLDEN ERA OF MALAY FILM IN SINGAPORE

The rise of two major film empires: Cathay Organisation and Shaw Brothers.

Shaw Brothers acquired a film studio in Jalan Ampas where many classic Malay movies were filmed. These movies featured songs sung by playback singers. These singers recorded songs to be mimed by actors in the movie.

The Jalan Ampas studio shaped the lives of many Singapore actors, singers, musicians and directors that became household names of this golden era.

Check Out:
P. Ramlee
Zubir Said

1900'

1910'

1920'

1930'

1940'

1950'

A MELTING POT

The invention of the phonograph changed how people listened to music. Before that, music had to be listened to live but after the invention of the recording device, people could listen to music anytime, anywhere.

Nuri Terbang Malam, or *The Parakeet That Flew at Night*, was the first ever recorded Malay song by Gramophone. It was produced by sound engineer, Fred Gaisberg, and assistant George Dillnut.

Music in Singapore was a melting pot of cultures from the new immigrants and the rich musical heritage of the Malay world from south of Siam to Sumatra.

ALL THAT JAZZ!

Singapore became the epicentre for arts and culture, attracting record companies and musicians from around the region.

Jazz and Big Band music was fresh and influential. Malay musicians were highly skilled and sought after, and were music trendsetters in the region, adopting, adapting, and playing these music styles.

Musicians played live to accompany the new silent movies.

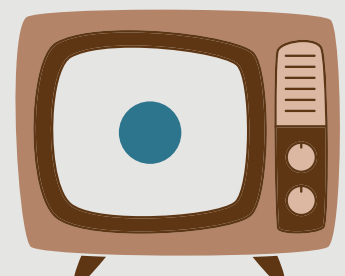
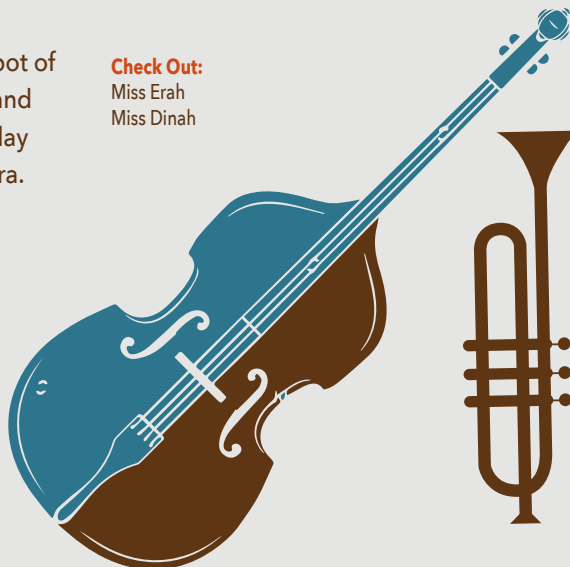
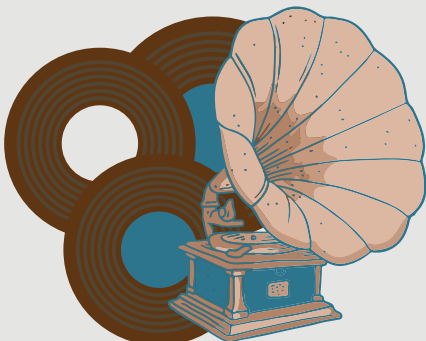
Check Out:
Miss Erah
Miss Dinah

WAR

During the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945, music from the west and radio broadcast were banned. Malay musicians were sent to entertain the Japanese.

Malay songs were translated to Japanese for entertainment or propaganda.

During the post-war period, service resumed as the *orkes* accompanied the various dances like *joget*, *ronggeng*, foxtrot and cha-cha at popular nightlife venues such as Happy World (later renamed as Gay World) and New World.





HIPPIES, ROCK AND DISCO!

American and British music and subcultures were popular with Malay youths whereas, the counterculture of hippies, rockers and disco were causing concern from the authorities.

Government policies including imposed tax were implemented to curb the counterculture.

Singapore was the recording hub for local and regional Malay superstars under major labels like EMI, WEA, Warner, Polygram and Senada.

Check Out:

Ismail Haron
Rahimah Rahim
Anita Sarawak
J. Mizan

I WANT MY MTV!

A fusion of contemporary pop and ethnic Malay music by a new Malay intelligentsia movement which eventually became known as Nusantara Music took off.

MTV in Singapore introduced audiences to a variety of music genres and subcultures including grunge, metal, punk, indie and rap.

Asia Bagus, an Asian singing competition, hosted by Singaporean performer, Najip Ali, introduced audiences to artists such as Maizurah Hamzah and Sheikh Haikel, part of the rap duo, Construction Sight.

Check Out:

Najip Ali
Rausyanfikir
Nuradee

PRESENT DAY & BEYOND

The Malay music landscape in Singapore is ever-changing and evolving, and there is no one defining genre.

Malay artists in Singapore are carving out their own narratives and creating music in and across a variety of styles and genres, from the traditional to the more experimental.

Check Out:

Nadi
NADA
Nobat Kota Singa
Akeem Jahat

1960' 1970' 1980' 1990' 2000' 2010'

THEY LOVED IT: POP YEH YEH

Pop Yeh Yeh bands were popular with youths in the Swinging 60s, who were influenced by the social revolution of the era. The genre got its name from the famous Beatles song, *She Loves You*.

Youths learned how to play modern instruments like the electric guitar.

Singapore became the epicentre of a pop revolution with over 120 local music labels.

Check Out:

M. Osman & The Clans
Kassim Selamat & The Swallows
Sanisah Huri



RISE AND FALL

Demand for artists and recordings was high with concerts that sold out.

Television played a key role as it shone a spotlight on local talents and their music. Rock and heavy metal music swept through media.

Developments in music declined including a steady exodus of artists as the hub of Malay music shifted to Kuala Lumpur because of its huge domestic market.

Check Out:

Sweet Charity
Kembara
Gingerbread



REALITY TV AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology, the internet and social media were central to the expansion of Malay music in Singapore.

Singaporeans got their very first dedicated Malay channel on local TV, which highlighted more local Malay musicians.

Local reality TV competitions produced winners who eventually went into the Malay music industry.

Comedy music bands were also a popular niche.

Check Out:

Taufik Batisah
Hady Mirza
Koosmangat

