

Simon Cheong

Critique, Commentary and Rectification

on

Nathan Fischer's *Pride, Pedagogy and Performance: Getaran Jiwa, Variations on a Malaysian Song op. 125,*

John Duarte

by

Simon Cheong

Abstract

This paper critique, commentary and rectification investigates the paper on Pride, Pedagogy and Performance on the validity and direction of the paper. The method used will be a running commentary following the course of this paper as presented and will present facts, critique and rectifies contentious issues in a discussion.

Getaran Jiwa, Variations on a Malaysian Song, Op. 125 (1996) by John W. Duarte (1919-2004)

Theme

Var. 1, Cheerfully

Var. 2, Doloroso

Var. 3, Animato

Var. 4, Adagio Sereno

Finale, Tempo di Valse

Keywords - *Malaysian classical guitar music, John W. Duarte, Variations on a Malaysian Song, Getaran Jiwa, Op. 125, Nathan Fischer, Simon Cheong*

Elation was the feeling that I had felt when I stumbled onto this paper by Nathan William Fischer - *Pride, Pedagogy and Performance: Getaran Jiwa, Variation on a Malaysian Song op 125* by John Duarte {published in Malaysian Music Journal ([mmj.upsi.edu.my/images - MMJVol13P3-2-MMJ.pdf](http://mmj.upsi.edu.my/images/MMJVol13P3-2-MMJ.pdf))}.

The reason for this elation:

- i. Malaysian Music Journal is a fully peer-reviewed academic journal that highlights music scholarship and related activities with a particular focus on the ASEAN region. With this, recognition is shown on the importance of the above-mentioned work.
- ii. This also highlights the fact that a world-renowned composer had written specifically for Malaysians on a Malaysian song.
- iii. This is also the very first time that a world-renowned composer has written an international concert work of significance being John Duarte's contribution¹ to Malaysian music, and more so, specifically for

¹ This work was written at the same time as *Variations on an Indonesian Song, op124*. I will be recounting how these two works came about. Two works contributed by John Duarte.

the Malaysian Classical Guitar repertoire. Probably the only two works that could have international recognition for the classical guitar repertoire with reference to Malaysians till this day - 30 August 2015!

iv. This elation was further strengthened upon reading the first sentence Nathan made in the 'Abstract' of his paper. I will quote it here - "*In 1996, John Duarte composed the first internationally recognised Malaysian National concert work for solo classical guitar entitled Getaran Jiwa, Variations on a Malaysian Song, Op. 125*".

v. Lastly, this paper will be shown as the first paper on Variations on a Malaysian song op. 125 (Getaran Jiwa). As it is published in Malaysian Music Journal and can be found on the net, it will become authoritative and would become historical evidence for future references. This is the reason for this paper Critique, Commentary and Rectification.

Cantankerous I do not hope to be, but for the sake of historical accuracy, I will need to state, as is And before I go into the actual discussion, I will have to qualify myself.

i. Qualifying myself to this task, firstly, this work was published by me (Classical Guitar Society (WP/Sel) Malaysia, edition Simon Cheong).

ii. I am the President of the Classical Guitar Society (WP/Sel) Malaysia. My position holds me responsible for all that relates to the society and this paper on the Society's publication requires my attention.

iii. This work by John Duarte was thought up by me in securing a sponsorship from Toyota Malaysia - to commission a piece of music by a world-renowned composer for a world premiere in Malaysia played by a Malaysian with the composer in attendance. Such a case has never ever happened before in Malaysia - definitely not for the classical guitar!²

iv. John Duarte was my teacher.

The Discussion

In general, after being elated upon reading the first sentence in the abstract, I found difficulty finding truth in the line of thought as I read on. There was a heavy slant towards P. Ramlee and not towards the work in mention.

For example,

This paper investigates elements found in the original motion picture soundtrack of Antara Dua Darjat, and the transference from P. Ramlee's song to Duarte's setting of the

² I believe that this is so even when other instruments are taken into consideration. This is truly a historically important event for classical music practitioners in Malaysia!

theme in Op. 125. The paper will also explore the possibility of enhancing the theme's form through adaptation of primary source material.

The first question would be - why investigate the elements in the original motion picture soundtrack? Are we not talking about John Duarte's work? Should it not be - *'This paper investigates elements found in John Duarte's work especially the theme and in comparison to the original motion picture soundtrack of Antara Dua Darjat.'*

As I read on with "*The paper will also explore the possibility of enhancing the theme's form through adaptation of primary source material*" - I was taken aback with 'explore the possibility of enhancing the theme's form' !?

The word 'enhance' has the meaning of making something better or to further improve the quality of something, if one looks into dictionaries. Therefore, the connotation here would mean that John Duarte's work is faulty! Well, this is insulting especially if it was not qualified nor quantified by experts! I believe that the sentence should have meant *'The paper will also explore the possibility of comparing JD's work with that in the original soundtrack and make adaptations that is stylistically tasteful in performance according to the individual sense of good taste and preference'*.

It is impossible to construe every sentence if the line of thought and presentation has much to be desired. In my opinion, this paper is slanted towards the writer's own need to qualify his own performance of JD's work using his own adaptation and that which is only towards the theme. Such practice of just adding a different introduction (the introduction found in the original soundtrack instead of what was published) I believe is acceptable as long as it is tastefully done! As to the other rhythmical changes or rubato used by P. Ramlee, this points to interpretative aspects and interpretation is integral to a performer and performance. How one interprets a piece of music depends very much on the performer's musicianship, ability, understanding etc. and most of all a sense of good taste.

Pride

A voice that is sweet, soft, and melodious is reflected in the performance of *Getaran Jiwa, Variations on a Malaysian Song, Op. 125*. In English, the title translates to 'vibrations of the soul'. P. Ramlee, the composer of this famous 1960s song, is one of most revered Malaysian popular singers. But more than that, his music is a source of national pride for the Malaysian people.

As a Malaysian myself, yes, P. Ramlee is a national pride. The direction of this paragraph as it follows on once again does not refer to the title of this paper , that is, JD as the composer and the work itself - Variations on a Malaysian song op. 125 . The Pride in the title should refer to the fact that JD is a world-renowned composer of the classical guitar who had contributed two works for the Malaysian classical guitar repertoire and most importantly, the one work that uses a Malaysian song as the theme in a Theme and Variations. As Nathan himself wrote in the first sentence, internationally recognised national concert work for solo classical guitar. This is the pride that is found!

About JD

John Duarte (1919-2004) earned his place in the establishment of the classical guitar in the 20th century as a composer, pedagogue, and author. He also contributed as an editor of methods, books, and music by many of his prominent contemporaries.

As with the above, I will have to add that JD was also a renowned **critic** who reviewed concerts, books, scores and recordings. He wrote not only for guitar magazines but for other publications as well. For example, he reviewed recordings for *Grammaphone* and contributed to *Groves Music Encyclopedia*.

His composition output includes more than 150 compositions including *Getaran Jiwa, Op. 125*. This work is currently published by the Classical Guitar Society (WP/Sel)Malaysia, edition Simon Cheong (CGS). Because of his contributions he has earned a place in history as a respected contributor to the classical guitar history and literature.

JD was a very respected personality when he was alive, and his contributions to the classical guitar, already had a place in history even when he was alive! His contribution to the classical guitar history in Malaysia is of utmost importance to Malaysians as this work Variations on a Malaysian song op. 125 and Variations on an Indonesian song op. 124. is the first international concert work for solo classical guitar written for Malaysians.

Sources

Under the sub-title Sources in Nathan's paper, by the third paragraph, this was what was written - "*Steyn's piano setting is in F major with a five-measure introduction. The beguine rhythm with stresses on beats three and four is reflected in the introductory accompaniment*". The beguine rhythm is a well-known rhythm and the sentence states with stresses on beats three and four is disturbing. The question is - are there such stresses written? I do not see stress marks anywhere in Steyn's piano setting. The changes in the harmony creates interest as well as fortifies the rhythm and does create a stress on beat three but then beat four is a resolution with no stress!

"*This arrangement also includes pop chord symbols that provide clarity for harmonic motion and harmonic tension.*" In Steyn's arrangement of *Getaran Jiwa*, which I had obtained from *Siri Lagu Lagu Rakyat Malaysia 2* (number 11 in the contents page) published by *Kementerian Kebudayaan, Belia dan Sukan Malaysia*³. This is the official version since it is a government publication. The format used in this publication is to write for voice with piano accompaniment as well as guitar chords above the melody. I do not understand the above quoted as to how the pop chord symbols provide "clarity for harmonic motion and harmonic tension" ? The chords written above the melody is for the guitarist who does not read notes (since the notes were written for the pianist) to accompany the voice...⁴

³ Translated to Series - Malaysian Songs volume 2 published by Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Malaysia.

⁴ No doubt that the guitar chords may be used for analysis but their purpose here is mainly for the guitarist who is unable to read notes to use for accompanying the song.

In paragraph 4, to quote :

The second source includes two scores by John Duarte. The first is an unpublished manuscript and the second is a published score released by CGS. On the title page of the manuscript is a note allegedly written by John Duarte that reads: "I look forward to the day when most members of this admirable society can play this piece which is in fact their property." (John Duarte, 10/12/1996)

I took offense immediately to the word 'allegedly' in the above quote! I will normally present my books to guitarists who makes contact with me as a gift and so it is in this case. Later, Nathan emailed me asking for the handwritten copy of JD's Getaran Jiwa, which I graciously scanned into my computer and sent to him. If he had needed confirmation on the validity of the note and would like to see for himself the original handwriting⁵ of JD, I would have gladly obliged. To question the validity of the note is not a nice thing to do! This would cause unnecessary historical problems on accuracy.

Immediately in paragraph 5: "*The two scores of John Duarte's Getaran Jiwa, Op. 125 are almost identical with the exception of occasional fingering changes*". In publishing JD's pieces, I had made decisions to ensure that I kept to the original handwritten score as close as possible. This was checked by Christopher Duarte, his son, a musician as well, whom I was in contact with by email during the publishing process. I had made an acknowledgment to Duarte's family for their permission to publish. I did this out of respect and courtesy despite the fact that I already had permission directly from JD.

As to fingering, I prevented myself from making changes to JD's fingering but added those that I felt needed to be realised and clarified those that were absent. These were minimal.

Nathan mentions about a mistake in the score when he made comparisons between the handwritten and published scores. I do hope that this mistake will be spotted by any good musician who is securely grounded in their studies of music. I also need to point out that there is another very badly misprinted note. This is found in the Finale in bar 48 where the high F# should be an E. It sounds as a false relations to the F natural on the second beat. My apologies to those having a copy of the published work. I can only say that Ong Peng Yang who had set this had done his best and I have done my best to proof read⁶. Mistakes are inevitable I guess as in the publishing process, no matter how careful one is, there is bound to be a mistake or two even in the most professional of publishers!

Perhaps the most striking observation is that Duarte's setting of the theme is more or less a guitar reduction of Gus Steyn's piano arrangement. The differences between the Duarte and Steyn scores are most prominently seen in the B section...

From this paragraph onwards, the insinuations are disturbing. The differences between a transcription and an arrangement are-

⁵ I asked Jack for his autograph at the same time as I was asking for permission to publish the pieces, and this note was written in front of me! I would presume that I am living proof!

⁶ Christopher Duarte proofread too and yet mistakes are found! Sadly, this happens.

From Wikipedia⁷, the free encyclopedia -

1. "In music, an **arrangement** is a musical reconceptualisation of a previously composed work. It may differ from the original work by means of reharmonisation, melodic paraphrasing, orchestration, or development of the formal structure".
2. "In music, **transcription** can mean notating a piece or a sound which was previously unnotated... Transcription in this sense is sometimes called *arrangement*, although strictly speaking transcriptions are faithful adaptations, whereas arrangements change significant aspects of the original piece".

In the transcription process, decisions have to be made in a variety of ways. Although the transcriber tries his best to be faithful to the original, many possibilities appear - there could be a possibility of a change of key for various reasons (for the guitar, range and playability problems); appropriateness of the piece to be transcribed; weaknesses in the original that needs to be corrected, correcting printing mistakes! etc...

Nathan's observation - "*Duarte moves away from homophonic texture to an arpeggiated accompaniment as seen in measure 2, Figure 2. However, he continues to use Steyn's harmonisation as the basis for his arrangement...*" As a transcriber, I believe that JD realises, that the passage in question would sound heavy, awkward and difficult to play on the guitar if transcribed as is and thus, omits using what Steyn writes but yet creates an effective substitute. This is my opinion - one may disagree. One should also keep in mind that in a theme and variations, the theme is usually simple and hence maybe, JD kept this in mind during his transcription process. Not forgetting that (quoting from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) - "Most jazz music is structured on a basic pattern of theme and variations." - JD was a jazz guitarist⁸ before turning his attention to the classical guitar. JD should know this form very well, I will presume...This is very obvious in both the Variations on Getaran Jiwa and Gubahanku where jazz treatments can be heard in the pieces (variations).

The observations and comparisons made by Dr. Fischer should have been made objectively and his own opinion stated clearly and separately. The sentences, paragraphs, presentation and flow of ideas should keep in mind the main topic and work towards comparisons without misleading, as in many circumstances quoted above so far.

There were many points that were raised, when made in comparison, and I find it very interesting to note, only if the presentation was more objective and well directed. The presentation under the sub-heading - Elements for Performance Practice tends to make one put question marks in many parts although I found great interest in Mr. Fischer's transcript of P. Ramlee's vocal recording .

⁷ Although sources found from the net are not too reliable, I am making the quotes as I find the sentences fitting to my purpose and intent. I am not relying on it but using it to portray my meaning as it is supposedly to be universally understood by those who have learnt.

⁸ JD regularly worked as a jazz musician until 1953, in the company of Coleman Hawkins and Django Reinhardt.

Form - Phrasing and Form

In order to profile the work effectively, the theme, each variation, and the finale will be analysed individually. For clarity, the analyses will indicate phrases beginning from the nearest downbeat and omits the phrase anacrusis. Performers should consider this when adapting the following phrase profile.

This form of analysis as presented in the table does not do very much in my opinion and is not a musical way to analysis, for me. I will strongly state that this is my opinion only. There are statements made in the table which are questionable once again. For example:

Table 1 - "*The Theme creates a heightened sense of motion (?) by delaying the arrival of the perfect authentic cadence until conclusion(?)*"

Table 3 - Please refer to the original paper - There is truth here and yet the paragraph has a tendency to make one look at the score and say 'really?'

Question marks in brackets are mine and I find it hard to even make comments.

Introduction and Conclusion of the Theme

"The following discussion investigates treatment of the introduction and conclusion to Duarte's arrangement of the Getaran Jiwa, Op. 125 Theme. Duarte's arrangement of the piano score by Steyn is an almost exact reduction in the thematic areas (mm 5-33)" - JD was in the transcription process more than trying to make an arrangement. The purpose was to write variations to it.

"In the introduction Duarte borrows the rhythmic motive and melodic content from Steyn but simplifies it" - The word 'simplifies' fits the bill of writing/using the theme in a theme and variations!

This investigation takes into consideration possible changes, but only to the *Getaran Jiwa, Op. 125 Theme*. It does not seek grounds to alter the four variations or finale. This is because the theme was arranged and not composed by Duarte. As a primary source, Steyn's score still offers options for the introduction and closing phrases. Including arrangements of Steyn's phrases can be applied to Duarte's score to create a new performance edition with a 10-phrase group for the theme.

From this whole sub-heading, it deals with the fact that Nathan wants to add an introduction which he heard from the original orchestrated motion picture version. He feels that this would 'enhance' JD's work. I will point out that:-

1. As mentioned before, yes, he may do so from his personal point of view, after all popular musicians do have a tendency to do so (adding in improvisations). I have no comments to this as long as it is done tastefully but please read on in the paragraphs below for a better solution.
2. Again, the theme in a theme and variations is meant to be simple.
3. Do you really need to?

Frankly, if Nathan really wants to alter JD's work and that only in regards to the simple four bars introduction and even maybe to the ending of the song (theme), it is questionable... Why do so to JD's work? Would it not be better to start the process from scratch and ask oneself the question of the purpose that one would like to achieve?

I do believe that Nathan has got himself a little confused. With all the proposals that he has made so far, in my opinion, he should just make a new arrangement of P. Ramlee's song with all the flourishes and adaptations (the song still belongs to P. Ramlee and not a new composition which is what a theme and variations is!) In other words, a classical guitar (instrumental) version of a song (not sung although one should still hear the melody to sing along to if one so wishes) and not write a theme & variations! I presume this sums it all up but yet my commentary has to go on as inappropriate sentences need clarification from my point of view with the hope that facts are presented without misleading the reader.

My suggestion would be to use the original soundtrack from P. Ramlee, and make a new classical guitar arrangement, one that presents the song as instrumental music. Research and comparison would be for understanding P. Ramlee's song and to help in interpretation. But, research and comparison for the purpose of enhancing JD's Variations on a Malaysian song as proposed would be questionable.

To take note: I sent the Gus Steyn's piano with voice plus guitar chords version to JD as reference to write a theme and variations (my suggestion) -

- If I did not make a suggestion to JD to write a theme and variations, what would he have written? Which form or format would he have used? I wonder, it is obviously too late to ask!
- Did JD have access to other sources for reference before making his decision on how to use the theme? I think that he would not have, as in a theme and variations, just the basic song is all that is needed for him to write his variations on.
- Would JD have heard P. Ramlee sing this in the original soundtrack from the motion picture of Antara Dua Darjat? I doubt so, even if he had heard it, would he have used the introduction as Nathan is proposing? Once again, in my opinion, I doubt it as the theme in a theme and variations should be simple.

Technique and Musicianship

Suggested Alternatives

After having read through this, I need to point out that Figure 5.4.1 to Figure 5.4.5 are repeated again in the next page and all references to Figure 5.4.6 to Figure 5.4.11 are missing. In Figure 5.4.2, in both the published and ossia parts given has a wrongly printed note in the last quaver (an A not a B).

The fingerings and suggestions by Nathan are his to believe in and I cannot and will not want to find fault with, as it is his right as a performer to find suitable fingerings for himself and interpret as he finds worthy. The final product of his performance will be judged by his listeners.

I would like to point out another perspective to the passage below:

This kind of voice crossing is achieved by playing a higher pitch on a bass string while simultaneously playing a lower pitch on a treble string. In guitar technique the effect can often be a solution to problems such as avoiding large left hand stretches or facilitating a particular chord voicing. There are many reasons a voice crossing such as this may be utilised. In Figure 5.4.1, the CGS published edition indicates a three beat anacrusis that leads to the downbeat of measure 5. On beat 4 a voice/string crossing can be observed. Performers may face a problem with the indicated fingering because the importance is placed on the bass line over the treble line. The revised fingering accommodates for a clarified melody on the third string.

I personally would think along the same lines as Nathan proposes above, in days of yesteryears. Today, I see that clarifying the melody on the third string is inappropriate. JD obviously didn't want this. If he had wanted it, he would have written as with all other passages with these three notes as an anacrusis beginnings of the phrases, as single notes. The effect and sound that JD heard in suggesting to play these three notes will be lost if played as Nathan suggested.

In measure 13 of the Theme, the following alternate fingering is suggested. The CGS published fingering of Figure 5.4.2 is an editorial misprint that appears in both the manuscript and printed edition. The CGS published fingering does not represent the best solution for musical clarity. The *ossia* staff presents an alternate option for consideration.

The fingering here is not an editorial misprint, but suggested as is. There is no real answer here but to state that the way of using the fingers here is not one may be used to, but it is definitely a possibility. I have used such fingerings deliberately in passages that I had rationalised as better in many other pieces. It becomes a part of one's technique. In this passage, the fingering Nathan suggests is what I use too.

There are times when a change of finger makes all the difference to a passage musically and technically, it affects interpretation to various degrees. It changes nothing in the interpretation or technique except in the minds of those who feel so, and yet, a total change occurs in the interpretation that is sometimes totally wrong and sometimes totally wonderful!

When does one change fingering? There should be judicious decisions here as it depends very much on the score that is approached. If the piece in question was composed and the fingering given by the composer guitarist⁹, it may be best if one follows closely to the score in order to understand and hear the

⁹A composer guitarist is a composer who also plays the guitar. In the twentieth century, specialisation crept in, the composer was the composer, the performer - a performer and the teacher - a teacher, but the main exception came in the form of Leo Brouwer who performed mainly his own works although he does not perform on the guitar officially anymore today. John Duarte was special as he was mostly everything except that he could barely play the classical guitar - he was mainly a jazz guitarist. But he understood the classical guitar intimately and this is proven in the many books he has written and in his compositions. A notable personality today of a composer guitarist is Roland Dyens who has quite a few works that are loved and played consistently by guitarists the world over. Roland is still making the rounds as a performer of his own music today.

sounds that the composer guitarist intended. If one is able to have sufficient knowledge, experience and can produce a rationalised yet better musical/technical solution, actually enhances and yet seen and heard as an enhancement, or just an alternative, I will presume that the composer guitarist would not mind. After all, who would mind if someone's fingering of a passage is able to make the whole interpretation a glorious effect and bring to life a fantastic performance or just an effective performance.¹⁰

Conclusion

I will once again state that it will be preferable that a new arrangement be made rather than changing JD's work - Getaran Jiwa solo classical guitar arrangement by Nathan W. Fischer.

Special Thanks

I thank Nathan for acknowledging my gift to him in his acknowledgment but sadly, I have to make my comments here.

1. Sky Chuah's proper name is Chuah Yeong Chin.
2. Shuraifa Asmah Faruqi's support and advisement would be, probably as I understand it in my opinion, from what I had read, all that regards to P. Ramlee and support towards the production of this paper.
3. For the sake of historical accuracy, I will take to the fact that the people mentioned including myself will lend qualitative and validity to this paper. In order to qualify the validity, the people mentioned should be able to provide factual evidence and who have standing in the community to be able to appraise this paper thus lending their confirmation to the facts in this paper.
4. Other than Shuraifa; Fung Tong Sen, See Sew Hong, Ernest Thomas and 'Sky Chuah' are all my ex-students who had provided Nathan with moral support and encouragement to write this paper. As for 'advisement' (sic), I have taught Variations on a Malaysian song by JD to See Sew Hong and Ernest Thomas who might be able to give some insight into the piece. Chuah learnt Variations on an Indonesian song by JD only with me. I have never taught either of the pieces to Fung Tong Sen, did he learn the pieces to have any insight into the pieces? The insight that these students of mine may have on the piece in question or even about JD, is questionable. Would they be able to give any form of validity to this paper? What have they contributed to this paper? Did they read the paper before publication and gave Nathan advice on the facts that were presented?¹¹

¹⁰ It was in August 1983, Cannington Guitar Summer School, I was playing for JD in his masterclass, his most popular English Suite, the Prelude. Irina Kirscher, another student, was in the audience and she asked in the masterclass why I had not followed JD's instruction *molto rit.* in the last two semiquavers of the second count in bar 17, and my answer to her with a defensive ego was I could not feel it that way. I preferred a pause. JD allowed us to slug it out without saying anything but he did mention that in the Folk Song five bars to the end was written 'un poco *mesto*' which must be followed and he congratulated me for doing so and how he hates it when performers missed this!

¹¹ I have to apologise to my ex-students for what I have written above. I have no choice for the sake of historical accuracy and evidence and will only state *as is*.

5. As to myself, other than "*the generous gift of the published score and manuscript*" to Nathan, I played no part in this paper. Nathan did not approach me about whatever facts he needed on this variations of John Duarte or on JD himself, or to the events leading to JD's contribution to the classical guitar's repertoire in Malaysia. This is the reason for me to write 'Critique, Commentary and Rectification' (for the sake of historical evidence).

In the reference section is found "*Ramlee, P. (2014). **Getaran Jiwa, Variation on a Malaysian Song, Op 125** [Unpublished Sound Recorded By Nathan William Fischer]. Selangor, Malaysia*" Should this not be read as "*Duarte, J., **Variation on a Malaysian Song, Op 125 (Getaran Jiwa)** [Unpublished Sound Recorded By Nathan William Fischer(2014)]. Selangor, Malaysia*". Variations on a Malaysian Song, op. 125 is a work by John Duarte and not P. Ramlee!. This unpublished sound recorded found in the references, should not be available for public consumption as it will infringe copyrights held by the publisher {Classical Guitar Society Malaysia (WP/Sel) Malaysia, edition Simon Cheong (CGS)}. According to copyrights law, the publisher has the sole rights to a premiere recording¹². Nathan sent me an sms about his recording sometime around the 3rd week of April 2014 when I was in Nordhorn, Germany where I was making my debut CD as well as having been invited to Gitarrenfestival Nordhorn 2014 to perform for the festival. I had immediately replied stating that if he wished to do the premiere recording of JD's Variation on a Malaysian Song op. 125, he will need to officially write in for permission. I did not get a reply and on 5 August 2014, I sent a message to him on Facebook Messenger about this permission as well as to ask him to take down the recording he had put up in Soundcloud. Once again, there was no reply. I had also sent an email to him regarding this but again, no response. I then sent an email to Soundcloud about this infringement of copyrights. Soundcloud took immediate action and the recording was removed. I do not hope to come across anymore infringements of copyright to the above work as the Society does not want a legal recourse.

The Story

I will now recount how this work, Variations on a Malaysian Song op. 125 (Getaran Jiwa) came about. I will quote from my lecture notes for a lecture on John Duarte - *Lecture Notes for Saigon International Guitar Festival 2014, Friday 14 November 17:15 - 18:15 **John Duarte (1919-2004) - 'His Life and Music' as I experience it by Simon Cheong***

...Although not practising the guitar or improving myself, the restless me who needs fulfillment and someone who had been championing the interest of the classical guitar in Malaysia once again took hold. I started off the Classical Guitar Society Malaysia and had the most important annual event in its calendar - the Guitar Camp. This Camp was formulated by me based on the experiences I had had in Cannington. The Guitar Camp was really successful after the first year in 1993 and by 1996, by providence and goodwill, one of my students offered to get sponsorship for a really good event for the Society. My mind raced on as to how to secure this sponsorship from Toyota Malaysia. Of course, as everyone knows I was John Duarte's student and with my close ties to him, bringing John Duarte to Malaysia once again was on

¹² International Copyright laws and Copyright laws of Malaysia.

the agenda. I discussed with my student¹³ how it should be done. The most important thing about bringing Jack to Malaysia was the fact that he was a world-renowned composer of the classical guitar. Thus came to my mind - to commission a piece of music from Jack since with the sponsorship, we had the resources to do so. I then thought what sort of a piece and quickly, I decided that a variations on a Malaysian song is best, so I suggested to Jack to write a Variations. Now, to decide on the song.

The song I chose was Gubahanku, but quickly realised that I had chosen an Indonesian song, I threw the choice of song open to my committee members at that time and P. Ramlee's Getaran Jiwa was suggested. I got the song and sent it over to Jack.

Well, as I was not practising anymore and being the organiser, performing a world premiere was not on the cards for me and I had to choose one of my students to do so. As Jack composed, he would fax the readied page to me and I would start teaching my student¹⁴ the piece (as well as teaching the whole programme, a programme that I had to make with whatever repertoire the student had within those few short months as well as trying to bring the student's level to a decent presentation...whew!)

The time came when Jack arrived in Malaysia. I picked him up from the airport to my home and upon arrival Jack handed to me, bound with cover, the photocopy of his handwritten, newly minted variations. Two Variations! Variations on a Malaysian song op 125, 'Getaran Jiwa' and Variations on an Indonesian song op 124, 'Gubahanku'.

He handed these two pieces to me and said, you can have both for the price of one! Once again, showing a magnanimous and generous man who was not calculative but always supportive and I must admit that with hindsight once again, his support of me was something I had never really known. Maybe, like my own sons who would take a lot of things for granted, I too, had taken his support for granted. My folly.

Well, these two pieces made history in Malaysia. As never before had there been a world-renowned composer composing variations on a Malaysian song for the classical guitar repertoire and here it is. His contribution. Furthermore, the world premiere was performed in his presence in Malaysia by a Malaysian for Malaysians!

Here is additional information that would be of relevance :

- An addendum to be added is that the Variations on an Indonesian Song op124. 'Gubahanku' had its world premiere only in 2008 by myself and a world premiere of this recording was made in Nordhorn , Germany in April 2014.
- In 1996, apart from the world premiere, JD brought along 6 cassettes - acceptable recordings of all his works and along with it were notes 'Recordings of works by John Duarte' , lists of 'Published original works by John W. Duarte', 'Published arrangements & didactic works by John

¹³ The student in question prefers not to be named.

¹⁴ This student has been mentioned in Nathan's paper Pride, Pedagogy and Performance.

W. Duarte', and a list of 'Known recordings of works by John W. Duarte'. I do not presume that there are very many people out there with these that were given to me by Jack himself. From 1996 till 2004, what are his newest compositions? How many more new compositions, arrangements or didactic works were produced and published? What about newer recordings that surpassed his expectations? Definitely, Variations on a Malaysian song op.125 (November 2008) and Variations on an Indonesian song op. 124 (October 2008) published by the Classical Guitar Society Malaysia are the latest addition. My recording of Variations on an Indonesian song (Nordhorn 2014) would be the only known recording of it and maybe the latest recording of John Duarte's works.

- Before Jack left Malaysia, I asked him for permission to publish the commissioned piece (both pieces) and he obligingly said yes, plus he gave me a free hand with no strings attached to publishing the pieces. He did mention to me that these pieces most probably do not have any commercial value worldwide but will be of local interest only. Sadly, I never published the pieces until after his death. (These pieces may not have commercial value but nevertheless are not only of local interest but now as evidenced, of historical value. Not just locally but internationally as JD is an international figure and has his place in history).
- The permission to publish the pieces was made as I asked Jack for his autograph on the cover of the bound handwritten photocopies of which he wrote - "I look forward to the day when most members of this admirable society can play this piece which is in fact their property." (John Duarte, 10/12/1996) on the cover of *Getaran Jiwa* and "It does not really matter that this tune is not Malaysian - music is music and national differences don't count. Your Society and its organisers not least Simon Cheong deserve every support we can all give to them." (John Duarte, 10/12/1996) on the cover of *Gubahanku*.

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Biography



Simon Cheong, Malaysian guitarist, a student of John Duarte, he has given numerous performances and has appeared on Malaysian Radio and TV as well as on ORTV, Turkey; HCMC TV, Vietnam and TV5, Philippines

The founder and President of Classical Guitar Society (WP/Sel) Malaysia, he is the festival director of 'CGS Malaysia International Guitar Festival & Camp' and he formed the Kuala Lumpur Guitar Ensemble II (2004 - 2013). He has performed and given masterclasses at guitar festivals in Turkey, Thailand, Germany, Vietnam, Philippines and India.

Simon has taught degree and diploma programmes at University Technology MARA Malaysia (1990 - 2011). His publications include his arrangements for the classical guitar - Tanah Pusaka, Mak Inang and Putra Putri (as quartets as well as solo arrangements).

His debut recording entitled 'Gubahanku' premieres John Duarte's Variations on an Indonesian song op124.

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