

## AN ANALYSIS STUDY: MELISMATIC IN ORIGINAL MALAY SONG (OMS)

**Tengku Ritawati**

Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Science  
Riau Islamic University

### Abstract

*Original Malay Song (OMS) has become Malay culture heritage with historical background and special musical itself. Melismatic is one of special musical from Original Malay Song or melismatic in West music. The function is as singing style presented to gracious the rhythm of song melody. It has characteristics, because without melismatic, OMS will lost one of the special musical character. This study aims to analysis melismatic as one of special musical character in OMS. Data collecting technique did by semi-structured interview to four legend singers of OMS, literature study, discography study and field note study. After researched carefully, gained that melismatic is only general character. In the general character there is various ornamentation melody types.*

**Keywords:** OMS, Melismatic

### The Introduction

Original Malay Song (OMS) has assumed to have a very long history since the influence of Persian literature named Rubaiyat become the source of emerging ancient Malay literature around 16th century. This assumption has basic. The first assumption is by the prolific poet from Aceh Hamzah Fansuri in the 16th century has influenced by the Persian literature, but he developed Persian Literature in the form of two lines in one paragraph into Malay lyrics consists of four lines in each paragraph. The second assumptions, assumpt that the influence of Persian Literature actually had entered Aceh earlier, that is in the 12th. This assumption made based on the record got by the writer such as Al Farabi, Jalaludin Rumi and Omar Khayyam (1048-1124). OMS is not only has its own history but also has musical special characters known as Melismatic function to be better in song melody rhythm. Melismatic is one musical expression element very important and become the original special characters. The grandeur of OMS singers can be seen from their effort to pitch the original Malay song in the performance.

### The Short History of OMS

OMS has long history, there is no special written composition on that case. Some very limited composition in sum, both of them explained here stated that this genre has existed along with the emerging of Malay

History such as Hang Tuah History, Malim Demam History, Malim Dewa History, etc, that is around 16th BC (Hj. Mohd Zain Hamzah, 1961). If that is true, thus it might be said that this genre is grouped into the oldest popular song in the world, aged more than five years. Therefore this genre is not present in other part of the world except in the Malay Culture language, thus this genre is authentic and unique. The second, if there is a relationship between OMS with Malay lyrics, there is a speculation that said that Malay lyrics as the main chain and the type of The Middle East poet, because Malay Lyrics similar to ruba'i (ruba'iyat), that is a type of poem famous in Persia. Idawati continued her speculation by making comparison study between Malay Poem and Ruba'iyat (Idawati, 2013). Then explained there are some differences between both that is, usual ruba'i consists of two lines and each ruba'i is a whole unit also one complete semantic, while the poem consists of four lines and form related paragraphs. Furthermore said that:

If observed the difference between ruba'i and Malay poem above, thus understandable that ruba'i is not fully the prototype of Malay poem, but also closer to the form of *gurindam* (rhapsody). However there is difference because in Arabic-Persian literature (Persian, pen) itself does not know long

poem composed in some ruba'i meanwhile gurindam usually consist of long paragraphs which still as the main theme.

To the next part discussed the role of a Sufic man in the 16th century in Aceh named Hamzah Fansuri. The great works of Hamzah Fansuri has much inspire and made a reference for the works of the next Malay poets. Also said that scientist has agreed concluded that Malay poems become the basic for the growth of OMS today. Not satisfied with the speculation above, the researcher tried to get further information on Malay poem and traditional poetry in the Indonesian archipelago from other source. The first source, from the book entitled *Words of Paradise: Selected Poems of Rumi, New Interpretations by Rafiqi Abdulla* composed by Francis Lincoln (2000). This book is the new interpretation by Rafiqi Abdulla to the collection of Persian poem in 1204 written by Jalaluddin Rumi, a famous poet and his literature works influence until Aceh. This poet composition named ruba'iyat, the plural form is ruba'i in the 12th century spread also the change in the era Sultanate of Aceh. This book consist of 2 collections of ruba'iyat poetry entitled *Shams-e Tabriz* dan *Mathnavi-e Ma'navi*. Both of them contains teaching on moral and spiritual knowledge.

Aceh in the 12th century has been an area that often visited by large-scale merchants from the Middle East, Europe and China. Amirul Hadi (2004) explained:

*Early signs of the emergence of Aceh are observable after its unification with Lamuri of Mahkota 'Alam around the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century. Lamuri was a kingdom that, at the time, was better known and perhaps more powerful than Aceh itself. Yet there is little information available regarding it. Founded in around the ninth century with Krueng Raya as its capital, it was an important port-kingdom visited by many people from different corners of the world, such as Arabia, Persia, Europe and China (p. 12).*

From the explanation above that in the 9th century had present a kingdom in Aceh called Lamuri with Krueng Raya as the central. Since that time has started influence between nations and opened. This matter is possible the influence of Persian literature in Aceh, because according to the historical story entitled *Ying-Yai Shenglan* (1456), recorded that the society and the kingdom Leaders have believed into Islam Religion.

Below is the record from Snouck Hurgronje in Abubakar Atjeh (1985): At the time of King Mongol Hulagu in 1258 BC destroyed Bagdad more than five centuries as Islamic Kingdom, it seems like the Islamic kingdoms disappeared. Only a half century before the even occur, Islam developed peacefully and come to Indonesian islands and its nearest area.

Based on the records above, able to made assumption with the entering of Islam in Indonesia in the 12th century, thus believe that in the same era come also Arabic-Persian literature, that was in the form of ruba'iyat. Furthermore at that time was the golden age for the development of ruba'iyat literature in Iran-Persian.

The supporting development of Malay literature in the early time of Aceh Sultanate consists in Malay History book as the main reference of Malay history source in Malaka era in the 15th century stated by J.M.Gullick dalam Amirul Hadi (2004) recorded that:

*"...there is a certain amount of historical facts embedded in it. But its main significance in the context of social analysis is that Malay literature and history served to transmit the traditions and values of the community, more especially of its ruling class" (p. 4).*

The scripts above has proved the importance of Malay Literature and History in changing tradition also values in Malay society. The further question is how Malay literature gain influence and Arabic-Persian literature?

The first assumption made based on the popularity of Al-Farabi (870-950), a great sufistic and poet in Persian. His influential works were brought by Arabic merchants to Aceh in the 12th. He also

beside as a great philosopher and man of letters, Al Farabi has Arabic named Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Uzalagh Ibn Tarkhan, come from the ethnic nation of Farab (Turki) and he also a very talented musical expert. According to Majid Fakhry (2002), Al Farabi written some books on music such as, *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (Musical Theory), *Ihsa al-Ulum* (The Knowledge on Theory and Musical Practice), and theories on melody *Fi'l Iqa* also *al-Nuklah ila'l-Iqa* (Melody Transition). Unfortunately his books on music did not learn deeply by the Malay society at that time, while at this moment proved by the growing influence thus emerging Malay poems and famous traditional poetry that become the part of Malay literature culture.

The great influence of Arabic-Persian Literature we know from Malay Literature works in form of poetry called ruba'i is very popular in the citizen level at that time because it content good deed comes from Al-Quran. He gave great influence in Hamzah Fansuri works in form of Malay poem developing in the 12th century. His literature works were very famous in Aceh as written in Malay Annals and also Snuck Written, Hurgronye Marcopolo, etc. Make sure also through merchants from the Middle East to Aceh at that time, directly to bring together ruba'iyat, the works of poem or poetry of famous Arabic-Persian.

It is not only Al Farabi and Jalaluddin Rumi Omar Khayyam (1048-1124) also very synonym with various works of Ruba'iyat has great influence in the development of literature in Indonesia until now. Omar Khayyam has complete name Abu'l Fath Omar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam, was born in the city of Nayshabur, Khurasan Province, Iran. Omar Khayyam written 14 books on philosophy and literature in the time less understand by the people because the language composition was too deep to understand (Mehdi Aminrazavi, 2005).

The word of Ruba'i (in plural form Ruba'iyat) in the meaning of 'qurratain' (four lines poem) in form of words Al-Rabi means number four in Arabic numbers, Ruba'i showed a paragraph consists of four lines very popular in the Persian poem because the simplicity of style. The short

lines form aphorism/the real ideal emerge effectively. A Ruba'i consist of two hemistich or stanza with total sum of four parts. The type of this poem also called *taraneh* (snatch/fragment) or 'dobaiti' (two-liners) in the early era of Persian literature. In the time of Omar Khayyam, the reading of four parts where only the first part to the second and the fourth reading, to give more freedom to the reading (Mehdi Aminrazavi, 2005). Mehdi Aminrazavi also give five criterions to determine the original Ruba'iyat:

- i) Every ruba'i follows a theme from four different approach
- ii) Logical structure and the relationship from each ruba'i
- iii) Determining to message and not to the form
- iv) All Ruba'iyat presenting one theme relationship with the struggling of life that is: doubtness, protest, confrontations and hard critics (sarcasm)
- v) Elegy of poem

#### **An Analysis of Cengkok or Lenggok (Melismatic) in OMS**

Melismatic is the part of the terms used in OMS. Sometimes the musical artists often called with the terms *bunga-bunga melodi* or melody interest. Although there is difference in the name of the terms, the melismatic has the similar function with the style of singing presented to give the best song melody rhythm. It has characteristics, that is a synonym special character and specific in OMS. Without melismatic, OMS will be awkward because the quality or the singer creativity of OMS measured by giving individual melismatic.

Nur Ainun explained that the melismatic of a song depends on to the song text itself. Melismatic is more related to the expression of a song text. In OMS, the right melismatic has soft nuance and pitch more rumble. Thus what did by Nur Ainun when he made personal characters, different with other singer.

While according to Tengku Hamidah, melismatic is one elements of very important musical and become the special characteristics from OMS. The melismatic is very important thus become

the best special character as the originality. Therefore also make a difference on where is the best Malay song and fair. I often hear songs from Rosiah Chik. Rafeah Buang and Kamarian Noor. They are really not deny again their greatness in singing Original Malay Song. I got their specific melismatic which then influence me in creating my own melismatic style. Furthermore, I also often learn how to sing the song from the best melismatic. I would not allowed to explain the words, but melismatic is the product of our soul expression.

According to Tengku Hamidah Cengkok or melismatic is the highest result of poem expression or musical texts into highest value musical expression. Tengku Hamidah uses the terms “*bunga-bunga/flowers*” as the change from the term cengkok or melismatic. Without ultra sensitive expression, good melismatic will not gained by the singer, he says.

Aspalela Abdullah has his own argumentation related to melismatic in OMS. According to him, we have to create our own identity (and this melismatic). But it is able to gain by practicing and changing voice to adopt from listening melismatic from the senior singers. I also often to listen singings from Kamariah Noor, while studying the characteristics of melismatic. One thing for sure I also find special characters of melismatic of my own thus I got admittance from seniors such as S.M Salim.” I feel sorry that new singers now often make mistake by “*referring to the wrong person and the wrong song*”, He says. Melismatic is basically allow to produce with the highest expression for the content value in the poem (song texts).

SM. Salim is very respected by OMS singer everywhere, of course has good opinion similar with the three legend singers above. His opinion on melismatic in OMS need to recite as follow.” To sing this original Malay song is not easy. Weh have to be smart in melismatic the original song in which the melody is not in the notation meant. We allow to make better the song or worse the song. Its not an easy way to sing original Malay song. If have to sing a long song like ‘Laila Majnun’ is hard to sing it well”.

Thus S.M Salim gave explanation to us that it is not easy to sing OMS,

particularly because melismatic is not written in the notation. Thus OMS melismatic is individual style, the meaning every singer has his own style, depending on his creativity in making ornamentation for the available song melody. This is also relationship with the interpretation for the text according to the term from Nur Ainun called as the interpretation for the meaning of poem.

Therefore the informants consist of experts and appropriate as the legend of OMS has told about their musical experience in the case of melismatic in OMS.

Then below is the analysis from the point of musical theories on what says on the melismatic. In the term of west musical terms, synonym appropriate with the term of cengkok or lenggok is the word melismatic comes from German language which give meaning of vocalization art that florid (John Stainer and William Barret, 2009, p. 285). Then John Stainer and William Barret (2009) classified as a singing technique of elaborative and complicated. Melismatic elements explained as (i) a song or melody and (ii) a notation or some of it ornamented as a syllable without having extended syllable. In the term of British musical theory language called “Grace Notes”, in Italian language called “Fioritura” (P. 285).

Susan E. George, et.al. (2005) give information on “melismatic” as follow:

*“A syllable can be sung on more than one note (syllable extension or melisma) and also two consecutive syllables of different words can be connected to the same note. The punctuation of the lyric has to be attached to the word before the graphic extension or melisma”*(p. 163).

Meanwhile Michael Kennedy in the Oxford Dictionary of Music (2006) said that “melisma: is a group of notes to sing a syllables of words (p.625). It is hard to write definite melismatic with the right notation because every singer has his or her own different melismatic and always similar with the interpretation and individual skills.

After listening, observing and analyzing some repertoire example of song from the figures of OMS from various songs

such as the original, style, zapin, dance and mistress, thus need to explain that some melisma of OMS probably consists of some note ornamentation type, that is:

- *Acciaccatura*, that is a type of grace note in form of note or more previous than note originally from

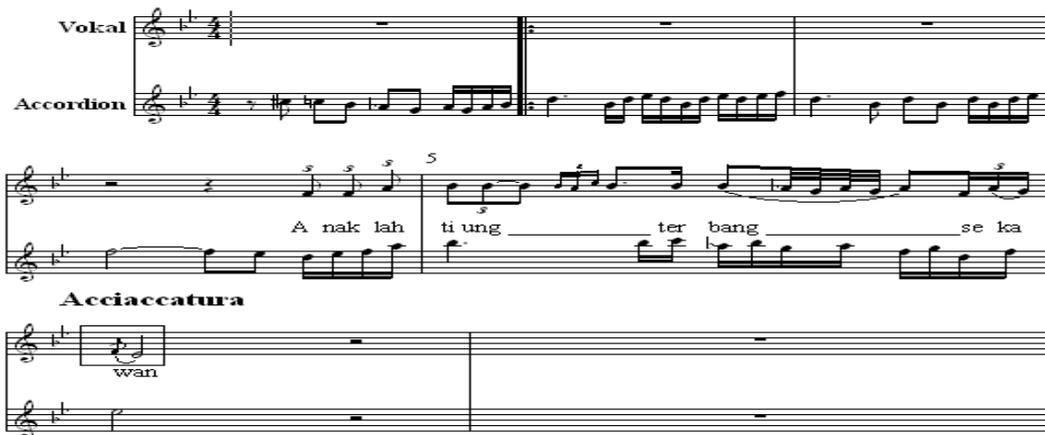
the syllable song text. It is often combine with other vocal techniques named as double or triple appoggiatura.

The example of notation 1: *Acciaccatura* in NLMA (Anak Tiung Song)

### Anak Tiung

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



The musical score for 'Anak Tiung' features a vocal line and an accordion accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Langgam Andante' with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'A nak lah ti ung ter bang se ka wan'. The notation includes a specific example of *Acciaccatura* for the word 'wan'.

The example of notation 2: *Double Appoggiatura* in OMS 'Song of Anak Tiung'

### Anak Tiung

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



The musical score for 'Anak Tiung' features a vocal line and an accordion accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Langgam Andante' with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'A nak lah ti ung ter bang se ka wan'. The notation includes a specific example of *Double Appoggiatura* for the word 'wan'.

*Appoggiatura*, also included into one type from grace note followed second than previous note or after it. *Appoggiatura* is one beauty in the singing and every singer OMS should able to master this technique.

Baird described *Appoggiatura* as follow:

*Of all the ornaments of singing,*

*none is easier for the master to teach or for the student to learn than the appoggiatura. In addition to its pleasing quality, it alone in the art enjoys the privilege of being heard frequently without becoming tiresome to the listener, so long as it does not exceed the limits of good*

taste as prescribed by those who understand music (Julianne C. Baird, 1995. p. 88).

Need to note here that in OMS, *appoggiatura* is generally not written to follow writing technique of music theories, but it is form from the beginning thus the result from the singer expression follow song melismatic and the style of individual singer. However, in OMS there are many functions of *appoggiatura* as follow:

- As the connector of melody/song to make it more melodious and giving the original of Malay character. The message of connector function is to make OMS has “melismatic” because it is legato/slur and few of stacatto/detached.
- To fill the movement of melody/song become has content
- To enrich the harmony variation as passing tone horizontally to harmonic note vertically
- To make OMS melody is more life and brilliant

In the context of “melisma” or the extension of OMS syllables, beside *appoggiatura* there is also trill as the special character of OMS. The result from observation and analysis of some examples of singing repertoire from OMS figures to make trill in singing are as follow:

- *Appoggiatura* is usually to lengthen the first note from the trill and sing it louder than the trill follow it.
- If want to make variation with longer *appoggiatura*, thus started with soft sound then harder to make it soft again along trill
- If there is strong beats thus *appoggiatura* in OMS usually followed accented notes
- As like a long trill usually first by *appoggiatura* but it is not a must that all *appoggiatura* in OMS usually followed by grace-notes and trill.

The example of notation 3: Triple *appoggiatura* in OMS ‘Lagu Anak Tiung’

**Anak Tiung**

Langgam Andante ♩ = 60 Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



Vokal

Accordion

Triple Appoggiatura

A nak lah ti ung ter bang se ka  
wan

- Element of **mordent** also able to know clearly in the example of songs of informants. Mordent is not an ornament who has two forms of upper mordent and lower mordent or called just mordent. Although in theory is not written in the notation of OMS, however practically it is

often singing. The writing symbol of mordent theoretically in the song of Jalak Lenteng song by Tengku Hamidah is as follow:

The example of notation 4: Mordent in OMS “Lagu Jalak Lenteng”

## Jalak Lenteng

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



Vokal

se di kit

ti dak se di kit ti dak be run tung la

Mordent

gi Ja lak Len

- **Grupetto**, is an ornament notation consists of basis notation with up sequent and down sequent. Below the example of gruppetto element contain in the singing of Nur'Ainun analyzed through discography principles

The example of notation 5: Grupetto in OMS “Seri Mersing Song”

## Sri Mersing

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



Vokal

Se ri lah Mer

Grupetto

sing la gu lah Me la

Grupetto

5 yu di ka rang o leh bi du an da

Grupetto

hu lu

- There is ornamentation notation as important as in OMS spread out with termination notation. In theory, ornamentation notation like this there in the end of song melody but the value of length and short of notation is relative. Termination notes like this is may consists of one or two notations.

The example of notation 6: “termination notes in OMS the song of “Eating Betel Fine”

**Makan Sirih**

Langgam Andante ♩ = 56 Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati

Vokal

Accordion

Ma kan lah

si rih u jung lah u ju ngan a du hai lah

**Nada Penyelesaian (Termination Notes)**

sa yang ku rang lah ka

**Nada Penyelesaian (Termination Notes)**

pur tam ba hi lah sa dah



The example of notation 7: ‘Termination notes in OMS the song of “Jalak Lenteng”

**Jalak Lenteng**

Langgam Andante ♩ = 60 Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati

Vokal

Accordion

Pu kul gen dang ku lit bi

**Nada Penyelesaian (Termination Notes)**

a wak



- The analysis to the example of figures song and discography study find out that other ornament notation is slide notes. Ornament notes slide to the main notes slur. It is different with appoggiatura which is note in leaps, this slide notes always move with interval with steps wise. Such as in appoggiatura, slide notes also may consists of two or three notes to the real notes in a song melody.

The example of notation 8: (Slide notes) in OMS the song of *Mak Inang Pulau Kampai*'

### Mak Inang Pulau Kampai

Mak Inang  
Moderato ♩ = 84

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



The musical notation for 'Mak Inang Pulau Kampai' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (Vokal) and the accordion accompaniment (Accordion). The vocal line includes the lyrics 'Sung guh in' with a slide note (s) above the 'in'. The second system shows the vocal line and the accordion accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'dah si Pu lau' and 'Kam pai' with a slide note (s) above 'Kam'. The accordion accompaniment features slide notes (Nada Luncuran) indicated by a box around the notes.

- **Trill**, or notations flow like a wave, often present in OMS. Although it is not written theoretically in the score, but every singer of OMS studied gained to produce the soft and impress trill voice. In other words, it is not too excessive thus explain the softness of oscillation. The first level for a new singer in OMS should able to make trill of particular syllable thus resulting beauty of melismatic. However it need to pay attention if “trill” ahead by an appoggiatura notes, thus appoggiatura notes should become the first note to the “trill”.

The example of notation 9: “Trill “ or flowing notes such as wave in OMS the song of “*Mak Inang Pulau Kampai*”

### Mak Inang Pulau Kampai

Mak Inang  
Moderato ♩ = 84

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati



The musical notation for 'Mak Inang Pulau Kampai' is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line (Vokal) and the accordion accompaniment (Accordion). The vocal line includes the lyrics 'Sung guh in' with a trill (s) above 'in'. The second system shows the vocal line and the accordion accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'dah si Pu lau' and 'Kam pai' with a trill (s) above 'Kam'. The accordion accompaniment features trills (Trill) indicated by a box around the notes. The third system shows the vocal line and the accordion accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'sung guh lah in' and 'dah si Pu lau' with trills (s) above 'lah' and 'si'. The accordion accompaniment features trills (Trill) indicated by a box around the notes.

If observe specifically as the example song of OMS, the composing song of OMS only use basic notation without writing ornamentation notation or in the term of Malay is *Lengkok* or *Cengkok* (Melismatic)

The example of notation 10: Basic Notation of OMS the song of “*Anak Tiung*” which is not written in *Lengkok* or *Cengkok* (ornamentation notes)

## Anak Tiung

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati

Vocal

Accordion



hin gap di da han di ka yu ja ti

ja ti

sungguh be

run tung ka lau ber ka wan

ka lau ber ka wan sa yang sa tu tu

ju an ber sa tu ha ti

ti

The example of notation 11: Notation song of “Anak Tiung” which is written Lenggok or Cengkok (Melismatic)  
(not ornamentation)

### Anak Tiung

Langgam  
Andante ♩ = 60

Lagu: Melayu Asli  
Transkripsi: Tengku Ritawati

Vocal

Accordion



3 A nak lah

6 Ti ung ter bang se ka wan

7 hin gap di da han di ka yu ja ti

13 sung guh be

15 run tung ka lau ber ka wan a du

18 hai sung guh be run tung ka lau ber

20 ka wan ka lau ber ka

13 sung guh be

15 run tung ka lau ber ka wan a du

18 hai sung guh be run tung ka lau ber

20 ka wan ka lau ber ka



Thus, the conclusions gained from above outlines are lenggok or cengkok (Melismatic) in OMS it means ornamentation notes. Melismatic can find in syllable which is generally not written in the score (if present) and sing it melismatic (slur/legato). Therefore it should be there is no more misunderstanding that lenggok or cengkok is identic with melismatic. But, in OMS with melismatic (slur/legato) there is extension of syllable song expressively by using ornamentation notes outline above.

### The conclusion

After studied more comprehensively thus in this paper assumed that the history of OMS is older than the previous assumption in the 16 century. If the history existence of rubaiyat literature art as the principle presence of old Malay literature, thus probably since the 12 century of Sultanate Aceh Era the Malay Literature was growth fastly. It assumed that in this period the early emerging of Malay Literature traditional poetry that become the main for the presence of OMS. So far there is no absolute certainty for that, therefore need to study the history aspect of OMS specifically.

Beside the speciality of Old Malay Literature history which influences old OMS, there is OMS musical characteristics specifically that is lenggok or cengkok (melismatic) generally made as melismatic style. Actually there are types of notes ornamentation in lenggok or melismatic of OMS. It is different with West arts song as a written art thus notes ornamentation to produce melisma also has written systematically. While lenggok melismatic of OMS is never written because OMS is in oral culture. From this oral culture OMS has

long history and esthetics values that keep on maintain as the heritage of Malay Culture.

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