Musical Practice of the Band in Singapore

Lee Tong Soon's entry on Singapore in *New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians* classifies "music" in Singapore into categories that are at once communal, cultural and genre-specific:

- Euro-American classical music, among the others like;
- Music of the three major ethnic groups (Chinese, Malay and Indian);
- Popular music in Mandarin and English
- Musicals by Singaporean composers and
- Locally composed, produced and performed rock music in the 1990s[1]

The sheer diversity of musical culture reflects what Lee refers to as "*a largely Asian population in a post-colonial setting.*"[2] The presence of such diversity of musics on one small island has revealed that much which is practised remains 'hidden' or perhaps not as readily available to us as knowledge *of* or *about* musical practices in Singapore. For instance, references to Euro-American art music and/or Music of popular culture reveal what is most remarkable; the absence of music for the Band and/or its practice. Firstly, the absence of Music for the Band in Lee's entry on Groves is not consonant with its proliferation in the present. Secondly, Singaporean composer Bernard Tan's overview of the history of music in Singapore, from the 19th century to the present, reads as follows:
Pre-independence musical activity in Singapore remained largely an amateur activity, save the relatively few professionals such as military bandsman or Chinese opera singers and musicians trying to eke out a living.[3]

References to the presence of the Band in Singapore seem caught between apparent absences to relatively little known activity among military bandsmen as professionals. The relative silence itself is deafening both in the contradictions and ambiguity.

Brief Chronology

The earliest records we possess are from the Register of St. Andrew's Cathedral which reveals the units or detachments of Military Forces in Singapore matched by the corresponding year:

1823	6/7/1838 58th Regt Bengal Native Infantry
1826	Bengal Artillery
1826 - 1831	25th Regiment N.I
1827	3rd Batt. Madras Artillery

1827	35th Regt Madras Infantry
1829 – 1830	43-44 4th Regt. Madras Native Infantry MNI
1830	13th Regt Bombay Native Infantry
1830	47-49 Madras Engineers
1831	7th Regt. Bengal Native Infantry
1832-1839	43-50 Madras Artillery
1834	29th Regt. M.N.I
1834	23rd Regt. M.N.I
1836 – 1840	49th Regt. British Infantry
1841-1842	39th Regt. M.N.I
1839 – 1841	8th Regt. M.N.
1840 – 1843	26th Regt. British Infantry
1841	Madras Horse Artillery
1841	Royal Irish
1842	Bombay Artillery
1842	The 13th Regt.
1843	The Bengal Volunteer Regt.
1844 – 1845	27th Regt. M.N.I
1844	2nd Native Veteran Bn. Madras Establishment
1845-1848	2nd Madras European L.I
1846-1849	48th Regt. M.N.I
1846-1849	21st Regt. M.N.I
1850	51st Regt. M.N.I
1851	Bengal Artillery

There are sufficient newspaper accounts of bands from some of these regiments, albeit brief. A grand celebration was held at Government Hill (Fort Canning today) to mark the birthday of King George IV in 1827. We are informed that dinner was prefaced by performances by Javanese musicians and dancers and followed by *the "fair arrivals from Madras" and the other ladies of the Settlement had an opportunity of indulging in the most delightful recreation* ***quadrilling****, which was kept up with commendable spirit to a very late hour when the party separated much delighted with the entertainment of the evening.*[4] (emphasis mine) The *fair arrivals from Madras* could have been either the Band of the 35th Madras Native Infantry or the Band of the 3rd Battalion Madras Artillery stationed in Singapore, at least according to the register of Bands at St. Andrew's Cathedral.

We are also informed of the Band activities in anecdotal historical accounts of Singapore: *The Officers of the 29th Madras Native Infantry [ca.1831], who had just come, allowed their band to play once a week on the plain, which is now called the*

Esplanade. As long as the Native Regiments were stationed here, the band used to play latterly twice a week; the chains were taken down opposite Coleman Street and the carriages were driven in and stood in a circle around the bandstand.[5]

Evidence of the reception of Band performances in Singapore are documented in a letter of regret to the Editor of the Singapore Chronicle reads:
Sir,
I regret to hear that we shall shortly be deprived of one of the very few amusements which exist here and which has been so obligingly contributed towards the gratification of the Community. The lover of music and others who are not insensible to its charms, have frequently enjoyed the opportunity of hearing the Band of the ***29th Regt. M.N.I.*** *perform on the Course, which has been a source of pleasure to me and it may be presumed has produced similar feelings in others. It is the first time that music has been so laudably introduced on the Plains of Singapore* [Esplanade] *and the execution is highly creditable to the capacity of the performers. I feel anxious therefore, Mr. Editor, previous to the departure of the gallant officers of the 29th Regt stationed here, to express my mite of acknowledgement for their kindness (in which it may be reasonably hoped I am not singular) for having so constantly permitted its gratuitous performance for the pleasure of the Public.*
I remain Sir,
Yours,
A VOICE IN SINGAPORE January 22, 1834[6]

Further evidence of political support of a military band is found in a statement, 1829, of the presence and cost of the appointment of Governor and its appendages for the united Presidency (PENANG, SINGAPORE and MALACCA) of the Straits Settlement, is listed below[7]

Governor's Salary per annum	63 150
Yacht **Nerelde** including wear and tear	28 000
Rent of Council House & c…	16 000
Hill Bungalow furnished	2 600
350 Convicts employed at Government House..	15 800
Travelling expenses on circuit	15 000
Furnished House at Malacca	3 600
60 convicts at 4 a month	2 840
Furnished House in Singapore	3 600
60 convicts at 4 a month	2 840
Public Entertainment	2 500

Band, including instruments {r}ations and dress	**1 500**
Private Secretary	7 800
Military Secretary	4 500
His pay as Capt. including Batta, Gratuity and Lodging Money	6 090
Aide de Camp	2 400
His pay as Capt. including Batta, Gratuity and Lodging Money	6 090
House granted ditto, equal to…	1 200
Total per annum Sicca Rupees	196 410
Add Secretary to Government pay & services	20 000
Deputy ditto……	7 200
Assistant ditto…	4 320
Sicca Rupees	227 030

Further documentary evidence indicated band performances at Masonic functions[8] and incidental concerts[9] in addition to ceremonial duties which we hear or read very little of as well as performances to commemorate the King's birthday. Tucked away in the Singapore Free Press review of a performance of *Damp Beds and My Young Wife and Old Umbrella* on the 27 September 1846 was this small acknowledgement: *the excellent music of the 21st Regiment's Band added not a little to the evening's entertainment.*[10] In his book *Indiscreet Memories*, Brown calls his memoirs an *eye-witness account,*[11] lending validity to the argument that his essay 'Music' was certainly about what the community understood and held to be the practice of the art form. Of the many chapters, one of them, the final topic, was *Regimental Bands*[12] referring to the significant role military bands played either in assisting with productions, in giving their own performances or providing music on public occasions.

It is instructive however, for us to note that Bandsmen acting in the name of the British Empire were actually personnel from the Indian Native Regiments, the most notable in Singapore being the Madras Native Infantry.

We are informed of a significant event in 1856. Gregory Booth relates the British annexation of the Maratha kingdom around the Madras area into the Presidency of Madras. This anxiety was more deeply felt in Singapore with a reorganisation of the Madras Army in India. A letter in the Singapore Free Press in 1865, informs us of the concerns:

We very much feared that the orders relative to the reorganisation of the Madras Army would completely cut up the old regiments and we find by the Indian papers that the officers of one of the corps now stationed at ***Fort St. George*** *have discharged their band. Such will be the fate of all the bands, we suppose and the consequence will be that we shall be deprived of many a pleasant evening at the Gardens and Esplanade, where the bands of the Madras regiments hitherto stationed here have been permitted by the Officers, to play for our amusement; under these circumstances would it not be advisable to have a Town Band. An attempt was made some years ago to form one but failed, but here is no reason that we should not succeed in maintaining a first rate band at a moderate expense now seeing that the European population has so wonderfully increased. The Band might be organised by the committee of the Agri-Horticultural Society. As the climate of Singapore is well suited to the Singapore constitution we think the Committee might engage first rate musicians in England and get them out overland and provided them with barracks in the gardens. Or it would be quite possible to engage the services of one of the bands now no longer required by the regiments of the Madras Army. We would prefer European bandsmen.*[13]

Of the many attempts made to localise the band, two prominent examples emerge, the Band of the Singapore Musical Society (ca. 1874) and the Santa Cecilia Band (ca. 1896). However, no records at this stage corroborate any musical activity beyond the respective years. Local attempts notwithstanding, the Singapore Straits Times and Free Press publicised visiting bands. The **Royal Inniskilling Fusilliers**, the Band of **HMS Invincible** led by Captain Buckle and Officers, **"The Buffs" The Band of the Battalion** and the **Band of the 5th Fusilliers** counted among the most press-worthy bands not because they performed their obligatory military duties extremely well (of which we have no evidence), but because they were seen and heard to provide entertainment at homes of Municipal council members and performed at well-known outdoor venues like the Botanic Gardens and the Esplanade.

Bands of the King's Regiment continued to play an important role in ways unique to the Singaporean context. A newspaper report in 1896 tells us exactly how important a change in the concert pitch is: *From a home paper we learn that…it has been announced that this year the Philharmonic society in London will lower its pitch to the* ***diapason normale*** *or French pitch. Again, by the Queen's regulations, all military bands are required to conform to the Philharmonic pitch…****Here in Singapore the matter is of great importance in the interest of local music. For it has been felt that if the changes were not to come soon into effect, it might be advisable to contemplate the idea of purchasing orchestral***

instruments at the French pitch so as to improve the conditions under which orchestral music has at present to be played...*the necessary information as to the course to be taken as regards regimental bands will be available in a short time.*[14]

An explanation for this rather curious excerpt is found in one particular occasion involving the preparation for a Popular Orchestral Concert on 8 April 1899, featuring the second and third movements of Mendelssohn's Second Piano Concerto in d Minor, besides selections from Wagner's *Tannhauser* and two movements from a Haydn symphony. Orchestral forces for the concert, a comparatively large one, totalling 43, 27 amateurs and 16 members from the band of the King's Own Regiment, the regiment stationed in Singapore then, who supplemented the wind section of the orchestra for it was "*naturally impossible to find in any musical community in the Far East more than a small number of Amateur players of wind instruments…*". [15] We are informed that a special "Children's Concert Fund" was set up based on donations of $1 or more from adults who wished to attend to cover expenditure on gas, **bandsmen's fees and transport**, printing and incidental expenses.[16] (emphasis mine)

This is not isolated practice at the turn of 20th century Singapore. The Cathedral Monthly Paper of St. Andrews, March 1928, has this to report:
The three performances of the Messiah on February 17, 20 and 21 were well patronised and were very well rendered…the conductor was Mr. E.A. Brown. The chorus of about 100 strong did excellently and ***the orchestra with the help of members of the Duke of Welllington's Band are to be congratulated on their efforts.***[17] (emphasis mine)

Here we have evidence of the King's Regiment stationed here (though hardly audible in print-news space) and we learn of their 'additional' role; supplementing of wind instrumentation in amateur orchestral concerts and rehearsals. More importantly, in the face of a lack of orchestral personnel, we find Band members supporting orchestral forces in Singapore.

The next most prominent Band to appear was the **Second Straits Settlement Police Band** reportedly formed in 1925. Its function was to *add to the atmosphere and provide entertainment at police functions. Following an audition held in India, successful candidates-all of them with musical background—were brought to Singapore to form a 32-instrument band.*[18] Oral accounts recall the formation of this Band with eleven woodwind players, twenty brass players, a side drum and bass drum player; the performers were mainly Punjabis. The band was directed by a F.E. Minns till 1935 and was succeeded by J.Hitch. For an ordinary Singaporean,

the band of the Singapore Police Force in the 1920s was one of the sources of Western music available to the public at large: *the earliest influences - shall we say, for the ordinary people was the **Police Band**; for the people who went to church it was the Anglican and Catholic church influences; those who went to neither of these places went to the cinema where they could hear music. So maybe in this way a love for what we call "Western music" became ingrained in the people.*[19](emphasis mine)

Alec Dixon, in his memoirs, recalls this development in a little more detail. *It was about this time that the Regimental Bandmaster of The Royal Sussex Regiment, M. F. Minns, was appointed in the rank of Chief Inspector to form the band of the Straits Settlement Police…He spoke the Malay language haltingly and his vocabulary was exiguous, yet he succeeded in transforming a gang of somewhat tatty Sikhs into a highly efficient military band in a remarkably short time. Thereafter the Band gave public concerts in the Botanic Gardens or in the Old Gaol site at Brash Basah Road, with occasional appearances at Tanjong Katong. One of Minns' musical achievements is worthy of record, for it occasioned some excitement among local Asiatics. From time to time he attended performances of the Malay Opera at the New World pleasure ground at Jalan Besar where he was greatly attracted by some of the traditional Malay love songs. One evening he told me that he hoped to include some of these songs in the Band's repertoire, but explained that there were certain technical difficulties of a musical nature to be over come. However, he persisted in his self-appointed task, and some weeks later produced what he described as a 'Malay Medley' during a band concert given at Tanjong Katong. A large crowd of Malays and Straits-Chinese turned out to hear the music, and its delight was expressed in a great ovation for Minns and his band when the 'Medley' concluded with the familiar and haunting rhythm of Bandoeng. Chief Inspector Minns will long be remembered by Singaporeans for his part in providing the orchestral accompaniment for the Gilbert and Sullivan Productions of the Singapore Amateur Operatic Society. In those days the musical score of the Sullivan operas was subject to certain copyright restrictions; and I recall Minns spent many of his leisure hours for some months in transcribing by hand all the band parts for one of these productions. Neither was Minns' influence on local music confined to the theatre and the bandstand. One of the recognised privileges of our Sikh bandsmen was their right to earn a few dollars during their off-duty hours by providing the music for Chinese funeral processions. It seemed to me that the ghost of the incorrigible Gilbert must have chuckled delightedly in the shades when it heard our Sikhs titillating those celestial ears with selections from H.M.S. Pinafore, or urging the hired mourners to 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes'.*[20] Dixon's amusement was to last much longer. Into the 1970s, Chinese funeral bands

have been heard to perform **Beautiful Sunday** and **Happy Days are here again** at funeral processions towards the burial ceremony, even the Bee Gee's **Staying Alive**.

The Police Band was to retain its basic formation even during the Japanese Occupation. Re-named **Syonan Police Band**, it continued to perform at concerts. One such instance appears in the Syonan Times 17 June 1942:
The Syonan Police Band will perform at the Waterloo Street bandstand today from 7pm-8pm. [21] *The following is the programme which will be conducted by Mr. Ganda Singh:*
Marsch "Hoch Heideecksberg" R. Herzer
Spanish Suite "In Malaga" F. Curzon
Intermezzo- two step, Anona, V. Grey
Selection "The Chocolate Soldier" O Straus
From the Garden of Karna Four Indian lyrics A.W.Pinden
Valse "Immortellen Valse" Gung'l
Dance "Hungarian Dance" J. Brahms
Kimigayo

Other advertisements of Band performances reported in The Syonan Times, went on through to 1944. Syonan Times reported that on Thursday, 15 June 1944, *The Syonan Police Band will perform at Hong Lim Green from 7-8 pm on Sunday* offering repertoire such as *Kogun No Sieka and Military Band I*. Information was also provided in relation to scheduled venues for performances in June 1944, for instance one on the 11th June at Jalan Besar and another on the 14th June at the Botanical Gardens. Following the Japanese surrender in 1945, Syonan Police band was renamed the Singapore Police Force Band and again Band of the Singapore Police Force in 1946 after a reorganisation and under a new director R.E. House. Oral accounts inform us that declining numbers, retiring bandsmen or simply bandsmen returning home to India, prompted a recruitment drive initiated in 1947 where many young Malay civilians were recruited to serve as buglers and drummers. R.E.House was succeeded by James E. Boyle who held directorship of the Police Band till a financial crisis prompted an article in the Radio TV Weekly in November 1958:
How sad it is that the straitened finances of the Singapore City Council have compelled the discontinuation of public concerts by the band of the Singapore Police Force. I wonder if the Police will make the obvious gesture to continue their musical services to the public without charge? The Police Band invariably command a large audience whenever they appear on the city's bandstands and their evening concerts add to the enjoyment which everyone receives from a stroll

along the Promenade or in a park in the cool of the evening. Another reason the Police should forego the City Council's fee is that the band is one of the Force's best ambassadors to the public. The smart turn-out and excellent music of Singapore's musical constables can help breed public confidence in our devoted guardians. Strike up the band, then, and write the cost off against public relations.[22]

In the meantime, Members of the Straits Settlement Police Band were not the only musicians free-lancing outside of their primary commitments. Clan Associations were strong organisations in early 20th century Singapore. With support from the Cantonese clan associations, there was the reported formation of the Yeung Chin Primary School Band before World War I. Mention of this band is made not only in its social and community functions but also in other fields of endeavour. Matthew Chua, a member of the Mayflower Minstrel Party from the Peranakan community, offers us some insights: *In the Mayflower group, there were about 40-50 members. Some* [were] *supporting members, some of them* [were] *musicians. Some of them like games like badminton and so they join in. That was how Mayflower Association was formed from badminton. Out of the 40-50 members, half of them were active musicians. Some of them are good for acting, drama. They were not musicians. Some of them give a lending hand. Not only the Singapore born Chinese Peranakans joined, even…good musicians from the Cantonese clan – Yeung Ching high school had a brass band, so they would join us. Even the band master would come along when his students were inside the band and we played dance music! We would get all our orchestrated sheets form London. If not, we have our local music suppliers. We would get the latest hits and before they sell, they would pass* [to] *us to try. So, we made use of the music for our dance and orchestra.* [23]

The Mayflower minstrel group were not professionals but took much joy and pleasure from making music. It is possible that the entire experience was enrichment rather than a full-time endeavour as well as the desire to be recognized as amateur musicians of very best quality of performance: *We play for the sake of joy…that is what we have in mind. Not like you call for the brass band you've got to pay…we* [are] *amateurs... we're not professionals. So we never think of demanding money. We play* [and] *entertain, you fill our tummies, we are happy already…sometimes people in appreciation for the service* [would] *pay the transport…we charter a bus, ok $15, $25 whatever, they gave in red paper…with that money we paid the transport. We went to all the amusement parks, the radio station…the same thing…we wanted to get the experience…For us* [to perform for the occasion] *it was free but for professional one had to pay…like during the early*

days, marriage processions needed brass band. So they call for professional brass band to play for them all the way and they had to pay.[24]

The Hokkien clan association started Ai Tong Primary School Band before the Japanese Occupation. Usually after their primary school education, alumni of the Band would join the Ai Hwa Old Boys Band. According to Ho Hwee Long, whose very name is synonymous with the Band Movement in Singapore, *in the 1950s…..some of the Hokkien Clan Associations had a very big military band for funerals, weddings, mainly for social events to support the clans….*[25]

The third most prominent wave of the Band came again in the form of political support but this time in the domain of Education. According to Chai Chong Yii, Senior Minister of State for Education:
The Band Project was launched in 1967 with the general objective of raising a band in every school. To start with, teachers had to be trained to play brass instruments and to conduct and develop school bands. This core of band instructors proceeded to form the Teachers' Military band. By playing together and performing at various functions, they develop further their skills and so contribute to raising the quality of school bands. This Band Programme, now in its eleventh year, has resulted in every secondary school in the Republic having a Brass or Military Band. It is estimated that 10 000 secondary school pupils are involved in school bands and an even greater number in Primary schools are also actively pursuing band activities. The movement has indeed developed at an incredible rate and this dynamic growth has created an impact on the very way of life of our country and our people. School bands also have the effect of building up school spirit and adding pomp and splendour to school functions.[26]

Tan Leng Kwang, in previewing the background to the Band Programme in Singapore Schools in 1976, informs us of the origins:
Launched in January 1965, the Band Project was the brainchild of the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. He had decided that bands should be formed in all schools in Singapore. The Government in introducing this programme in the schools had recognised the fact that group discipline, esprit de corps, and a sense of national identity can be gained by students participating in bands as an extra-curricular activity and the positive influence on public morale when school bands are heard and seen at outdoor functions and music festivals. [27]

Tan explains that at the initial stage, *the Music Department, Ministry of Education, charged with the responsibility of forming and training bands.* It was largely through such machinery that they *managed to secure training assistance from*

bandmasters of the British Military Bands who were then based in Singapore. Under a crash programme, 4 pilot secondary schools (2 English Language medium, 1 Chinese Language medium, and 1 Integrated School) made their debut on 1st May 1965.

From an instrumental configuration point of view, *Bugle and Fife Bands were introduced in primary schools in mid-1965.* Ten music teachers from the Department underwent a five-week part-time training in the technique of playing the bugle, fife and drums and *then sent out to organise bands in 10 primary schools. A public performance of 4 Bugle and Fife bands, each playing on its own, during a week-long music and dance festival in 1966, firmly established the band movement in the primary schools. Special courses subsequently were held every six months to train teachers on the staff of junior schools which wanted to form bands. From 1966, the Ministry decided that every primary school should have its own Bugle and Fife band.* [28]

Tan also informs us that *financial assistance from the Government in the form of grants was readily forthcoming, and this was to be the greatest single contributing factor to the success of the band programme. Government and Government-Aided schools interested in forming bands received substantial subsidies for the purchase of instruments, accessories and uniforms. The training of students was provided free by bandmasters and senior bandsmen from the British Military Bands, whose part-time services were paid from Government funds.* [29]

Within the first two years (1965-1966) 20 Brass Bands were founded and the successful performance of a marching mass band leading a 500-strong student contingent in the first Independence Day Parade in August 1966, triggered off a rush of schools wanting to form bands. Since then, the number of bands has increased more than five-fold. [30]

It soon became clear that the British Bandmasters and experienced service bandsmen employed to instruct schools was at best a temporary arrangement. For such a project to be sustainable in the longer term, there had to be training for local instructors to serve the schools. Thus in 1966, a unique scheme, as a long-term measure to provide the nation's own instructors, was implemented. Qualified teachers in schools as well as music teachers in the Department of the Ministry were selected to undergo a two- year In-Service Course to train as performers in the Teachers' Military Band and as Instructors of school brass bands. In September 1967, 61 teachers completed their training and took over as Instructors.

At this time it was considered unusual for *qualified teachers of academic subjects* to have *switched over to duties of full-time instructors, as well as performing members of the Singapore Teachers' Military Band.*[31] Given the arrival of a core of trained personnel and the anticipated expansion in participation by schools, *the primary concern of the Music Department was then directed at the improvement in the quality of performance, the building up of a wider and more varied repertoire and the organisation of even more spectacular massed band displays. To realise this aim, an Annual Band Competition was held. At this Contest, three top bands were selected. Winners were awarded Maces of Honour. In 1973, separate prizes were awarded for Outdoor Display of formation marching and for concert performance. Each year, this Competition or* ***Central Judging*** *as it was popularly called, commands great interest and the rivalry gets keener as schools vie against each other for top honours. In 1975, the Judging took a different form. Bands competing were divided into Sections A and B. Section A was for senior and finalist bands of the preceding three years, and Section B for beginner and less accomplished bands. Separate honours are thus awarded annually. These changes in the format in the competition are part and parcel of the growth and development of the bands in Singapore.* [32]

A significant transition was already on the way. *Towards 1973, a handful of instructors of the 180 primary schools with bands introduced brass instruments to their bands. The Fifes and bugles were slowly phased out and by 1976, 60 primary school bands were said to have some form of brass instrumentation with many more in the process of transforming their bands into brass bands. Better brass bands* reportedly *even introduced woodwind into their bands.* [33]

Writing about the Band movement almost ten years after the project commenced, Tan adds in a concluding paragraph,
The Band Movement has left a definite impact on the people of Singapore. This impact has registered in every activity and every level of the nation. The influence of the school bands is so great that they have come to be accepted as a national way of life. It is a fact, that no celebration in the school, community, district or the nation is deemed complete without at least a band in attendance. Visitors to the Republic cannot help but notice our school bands as they parade at ceremonies or perform at public parks throughout the island. With a band – Brass, semi-military or Military – in every one of the 103 Secondary Schools and Junior Colleges, and an even greater number in the Primary Schools, Singapore's half a million students have come to accept band performance, band discipline, marching and footdrill as important aspects of this challenging extra-curricular activity.[34]

The Ministry of Education, in response to a direct call from the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, set up the formation of the Band Project in 1966 and had for its rationale, a committed artistic and cultural endeavour, awareness and education of a general public, and a tradition that could resonate a national identity. **The Band Project** was launched as part of the extracurricular activity programme in both Primary and Secondary Schools beginning with four bands in aided secondary schools and nine bugle bands functioning mainly under the banners of the Boys' Brigade and Boy Scouts. Bands at this stage were mainly bugle and fife and marching and military in nature.

The Ministry of Education went further to organise annual indoor concerts in addition to the annual outdoor marching band competitions. Additionally, in 1966, the Music Department of MOE was charged with the responsibility of forming and training school bands. The Music Bulletin of Yamaha informs us that *in 1965, when the idea was first started, British servicemen (bandsmen) were employed to train brass band instructors.*[35] By 1971, Inche Mohd. Ghazali Ismail, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, was able to say, "….*no school, primary or secondary would consider itself a complete entity if it did not possess a marching Band*", a revelation of how the Band movement had "….*developed at a dynamic rate…*" given that there were in that year, 88 Brass Bands in Secondary Schools and over 100 Bugle and Fife Bands in Primary Schools. Its support within the school system has been consistent and has been increasing at an incredible rate.[36] 1970s, a special committee was formed to ensure highest quality of marching in addition to band performance. The former ECA branch, Police Academy, and Singapore Armed Forces were involved in the training and Band leaders from the various schools were trained in footdrill, conducting and leadership before returning to their respective bands.

As a consequence of the highly competitive school system in Singapore, one of the largest and most prominent spheres of activity and discussion has always surrounded Band competitions in Singapore. According to Ho Hwee Long, one of the most prominent figures in the Band movement Singapore…*from 1971 up to early 1980s, it was an annual event…indoor and outdoor…the same band must do outdoor display and indoor concert to show their versatility…in the early 1980s…parents complained that it was too time-consuming…then the indoor and outdoor alternated…outdoor competitions have dropped in terms of numbers…this year* [2004] *there were only 5…but in the early days, the National stadium was full…40 bands taking part…preliminary rounds and final rounds…*[37]

Given the move from scratch and beginning with bugle and fife as well as initially brass band instrumentation, there was inevitably a transition in instrumental configuration. Ho Hwee Long elaborates…*before the 1960s, there was no fixed instrumentation…but the basic instruments were there…flutes, clarinets, trumpets trombones, alto and tenor horns, sousaphones, but the constitution of the band was not fixed as it depended on function, financial support and the availability of the students…sometimes you may have more clarinets or more French horns…but after 1965, when the band movement had become more formalised…we began with the British influenced brass band configuration in the mid-60s…brass instruments and percussion…but some bands had an alto and tenor saxophone to help to play running notes…from 1965 to 1969, we managed to think about converting from brass band to military band…only the woodwinds were only used in the military bands…because of this terminology, after a few years, even the non-military bands, like community bands, became known as military bands…almost all Singapore school bands and even the Peoples Association Band became known as military bands…..One of the main reasons for converting from brass to military bands in the schools was the repertoire for the brass band which was very difficult…actually meant for professional bands and brass bands with a longer and stronger tradition…we had no choice but to switch to the military band format which was based more on an American model so we imported a lot of materials from America… in 1969, when I was the band director of NJC, I worked from the standard configuration; 6 flutes 12 clarinets, 2 bass clarinets, two bassoons, two oboes, two alto sax, two tenor sax, 1 baritone sax, 8 trumpets or cornets, 6 French horns, 4 trombones, 3 euphoniums, 2 E-flat tubas, 2 B-flat tubas…with the brass band configuration, we played repertoire from the British Band tradition…once I converted to military band, our repertoire moved towards American band music…When I started with the NIE Band in 1973…the instrumental configuration was 3 trombones, 2 tubas, 4 horns, 2 euphonium, 4 trumpets, 4 cornets…*[38] *from 1970s, we concentrated on American band music, 1980s European and Japanese music crept in…..the 1990s, Belgian, Dutch and Japanese music just flowed in…competing with the American repertoire today…*[39]

By 2000, there were reportedly 44 primary schools, 132 secondary schools and 14 junior colleges with their own bands. Currently, about 12,000 students or approximately 27.5% of students taking part in CCA music activities are involved in the Band. 2001 Central Judging Competition – 117 secondary school bands and 14 junior college bands with 7,709 participants were involved at the Singapore Youth Festival Central Judging Competition in 2001. In the present context, The Ministry of Education today, which oversees the Band movement in the school system, makes financial provision of S$ 132 thousand for a Primary school band

with minimum numbers of 53; S$ 203 thousand for the formation of a Secondary school band with a membership of 65 students; and S$ 207 thousand for Junior Colleges with memberships of not less than 65. This grant is based on what it would cost in terms of standard instrumental equipment for a wind band.[40]

Of all the Co-Curricular Activities conducted for schools, the Band movement takes the lion's share of participants to date. Band Concerts account for the vast majority of the annual concerts in Singapore, attended by people from all walks of life. Band Concerts can at least lay claim to a wide-ranging audience appeal. Recital programmes in Band Concerts have also shifted focus from familiar and traditional favourites to a wide ranging and eclectic repertoire and even works by local composers. The movement in the schools reveals the supportive role school teachers, principals, students and their parents also play in sustaining the momentum and engendering growth of the band movement in schools and beyond.

Presently community bands are very active with their regular public concerts. Anecdotal evidence suggests much of the supporting audience base comprises friends, family and loved ones. More schools and tertiary institutions are also setting up alumni bands. The more entrepreneurial wind ensembles even set up their own wind ensembles to experiment with interesting and specialized repertoires, programmes and instruments. This development has helped to provide more avenues for school band members to continue with their interest in band-related activities once they have left the school system.[41]

There has been an attempt made to represent interests of the band instructors. One such avenue was the formation of the Singapore Band Directors Association in 1995 with its stated objectives:

- To develop, promote, organise and co-ordinate the band programme in schools, junior colleges and centralised institutes
- To strive for balance in the band programme and to maintain a perspective for the total educational development of the learner.

The formation of the Association has been to develop and improve the band programme, curriculum, supervision and instruction. A concomitant task has been to encourage and find ways for band directors to upgrade and improve their skills through workshops, clinics, courses and of course, the unavoidable proof of the pudding – competitions.

Presently, there is no specific tertiary programme in Music that allows for studies in the Band movement besides the Music Specialisation undergraduate programme at the Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education.

Additionally, the Music Department has recently begun a Specialist Diploma in Band Directing which allows band directors to engage in a rigorous and deeper reflection of their skill and craft in practice. It is here that band directors need to be enthused themselves in order to make their 'sales' pitch to the hundreds and thousands of participating students in their school Band. The same Music department is active in postgraduate supervision and there are on record two theses written on the Band Movement in Singapore. Additionally, faculty members are engaged in research in the band from Composition to Musicological studies.

Studies of the recent history of Band movement in Singapore[42] have enabled their categorisation into:

- School bands (primary, secondary and junior colleges)
- Tertiary bands (polytechnics and universities),
- Amateur groups (all Community Club-based bands),
- Peoples Association Military Band – from the Canton and Hokkien Clan associations.
- Independent groups such as the Singapore Wind Symphony (Formerly NTSB), Philharmonic Winds, Paradigm Wind Ensemble, and others,
- Professional bands (SAF Central and Police Bands). Except for this last group, members who join these groups will come from various walks of life, from being a student in the school to a fully-fledged working professional.
- Singapore Youth Wind Orchestra-entry by auditions and expected performance in WASBE 2005 and beyond.

- **Clan association Bands**
    - Yeung Chin Primary School Band (Canton Clan);
    - Ai Tong Primary School Band (Hokkien);

        - **Service Bands**

- Police Band
- SAF Central Band
- PA Military Band
- PA-Pipers Band
- Overseas Service Bands

        - **Visiting Bands**

Ho Hwee Long recounts how *in the 1950s, other than the Police Band, there was the British Service bands, Far East Air Force band…British Navy band they were here in Tengah Air Base…ANZUK appeared in the 1960s……New Zealand Brass*

band was very popular in those days…..but they could play Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, in the 1960s and 1970s they went around schools in Singapore to perform. Overseas bands active in the 1960s and 1970s were:

- The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment band
- Military Band of the First Gordon Highlanders – the only bagpipe & drum band
- The ANZUK Symphonic Band which was a combined band of:
- The Band of the Royal Highland Fusilisers of UK
- First Battalion, Royal New Zealand Regiment
- Australian Army Band
- The Far East Air Force Band
- Gordon Highlanders of UK
- The United States Seventh Fleet Band
- The Royal Marine Band (Far East) of the UK
- The Royal Australian Air Force Band
- The Royal Artillery Band founded in 1962, formed with eight players and resident in Singapore during the 1960s.[43]

Discussion

The extent to which the Band was part of everyday lifestyle or discourse would be dependent either on a critical mass of participants or stamp of authority to warrant its emergence in a more specific frame. The next stage of individual memoirs, East India Company records and documents, programme details, persons involved in organising the evening performances, are just the tip of the iceberg that merit further scholarship. What is the significance of the Band in the history of Singapore? In his research on the Gambus Melayu in Johor, West Malaysia, Larry Hilarian suggests *musical instruments have always journeyed along the grain of politics, conquest and economic exploits amongst the communities so linked to trade, mercantilism, adventure and their source of entertainment. The study of musical instruments brings us to the intersection of globalization and diaspora, not in the commercial sense but to the close affinity of intercultural aggrandizement and adaptation.*[44]

What is true of musical instruments is also true of musical practices and personnel involved in them. The question of event as emergence is always a problem. Foucault suggests an event is considered more as a reversal of a relationship of forces…the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it…the entry of a masked 'other'[45]. Acknowledgement of the presence of the band in Singapore refers undoubtedly to the presence of a military Band, one which

began as a political entity and communicated that presence. Here is where the inversion of relationships take place - the masked other is not a Royal regiment from Imperial Britain but a Native Infantry from colonised India - Madras.

In Phan Ming Yen's brief overview of Singapore, the East India Company had a political and financial overview and interest of the fortunes of the island - meaning anything to do with Singapore came under the direct purview of a satellite British Empire in India. Logically, and logistically, the experience gained from colonising India would have been most helpful towards administering Singapore.

Secondly, and musically speaking, in an article by Gregory Booth, we are informed that a British observer in 19th century Madras, Scott who in 1813, in a letter to the Military Secretary of the Commander-in-chief of Fort St. George (Madras), urged the formation of military bands in the native regiments of the East India Company Army as a means (among other things) of improving the appreciation of European music amongst the Indian population, *our musick [sic] not being in much repute among the Natives of India*.[46]

This letter reveals how bands were being formed but also why native bands were most desired in these circumstances and how the presence of these '*fair arrivals from Madras'* kept martial music and musical entertainment in Singapore a tradition. The fact that the Madras Native Infantry had kept up the pleasure of its audience, at least twice a week, was a way of assuring the community in Singapore that not only was music of the Empire played but that it was played by Asian *Indian natives*. That even Asian Indian Natives could be trained to play European music, however effectively or convincingly, would suggest coopting of an 'Asian' in the processes of validating the British Empire. That they were performed at the Plains, witnessed by what evidence suggests, as a virtually European dominated audience would arguably have completed the Imperial circuitry.

Thirdly, and as I pointed out to the publishing of the Governor's expense accounts for the Straits Settlement for the year, the Band, rations and instruments account for less than 1% of the total expenses. As part of the British Empire's political and cultural arsenal, a band with instruments and rations cost comparatively little and easily amenable to repeat performances with approval from their commanding officer/s.

Amidst details of a presence of a European community where gendered lines are breached for the pleasure of listening to music played by a regimental Native Band, curiously not one mention is made of a local or immigrant or even Asian

audience. One is led to speculate that at best Cameron wanted Whitehall to be fully cognisant of an accurate description of the situation in Singapore, hence the concentration on "white audiences" OR that such music, probably the only regular diet of Western music, was meant for western audiences, which was played, ironically, by the Madras Native Infantry.

Given the situation in 1813 in India and the subsequent strategy, it should not surprise us to find the proliferation of the Madras Native Infantry, among other native infantry units in Singapore with its function perhaps to engender more effective permeation of 'European music' and by consequence its appreciation among the immigrant and local population; act as 'localised' media for European music served as a message of possibly political and cultural aggrandisement while at the same time able to provide repertoire that was familiar and expressly symbolic to an expatriate British community in Singapore.

Between the loss of the Madras Regimental bands, Band of the Singapore Musical Society and the Santa Cecilia band, there is evidence in newspapers, of ensembles organising fund-raising concerts, evening performances at the Botanic Gardens, Tanglin Mess and Esplanade. This seemed somehow to be a frequent report in the Newspapers as if to compensate for the loss the 'fair arrivals from Madras'. These bands were in reality visiting bands from the UK, USA and Ireland. Bands of the **Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, HMS Invincible, "The Buffs" The Band of the Battalion** – *were some of the few visiting bands mentioned in giving performances.*

What emerges in the writings, although not yet refuted in further scholarship was the membership of this audience for the Band – there is are isolated references to members of the Eurasian and Straits Chinese community as local supporters, participants or audiences. Remembering that many of these events were performances, begs further research which would prove helpful in ascertaining the nature of these performances, expectations and ritual proceedings of these regimental bands while they were stationed in Singapore. We are given very little idea of the reception of the band's performances beyond the repertoire played as well as how successful the event was in terms of the overall setting rather than the quality of performance.

In the domain of Western classical music, for instance, Phan Ming Yen's thesis informs us of ways in which distinctions were made through music. For the European community of Singapore in the 19th century, to practice, to perform and to listen to the music of its own culture was the act of shutting out local musics or a preferred definition in its time – 'hideous noises'.[47]

The Band seems to have had a mixed reception. The **Band of "The Buffs"** played several Waltzes at an evening function of the Hon'ble Seach Liang Seah, in support of a cause I am not sure they were aware of: *This is we believe the first occasion on which European ladies have been invited to a dance in a Chinese house. We trust it will not be the last, as such meetings will do more than anything else to promote friendly feelings between the East and the West and to indoctrinate the former with higher ideas regarding the fairer half of creation. We hope eventually to see Chinese and Malayan ladies appearing at such gatherings and enjoying the same freedom in social intercourse as their Western sisters…We hope that our other wealthy Chinese merchants will follow the good example of Mr. Seah Liang Seah by giving entertainments of a similar kind.*[48]

On another occasion, a remarkably articulate although irate neighbour related how his celestial neighbour (in contradistinction to coolie neighbour) was found to host musical activity although the accounts of what he heard are best quoted: ***It is true that the monotony of the Chinese music, which to the uncultivated mind resembles the noise usually met with a working smithy, was interspersed with music given by a band of musicians playing European instruments. The two orchestras evidently vied with each other as to which could make the most bunyi-bunyi. They followed each other in incessant rotation….***[49]

The Singapore Chronicle, Free Press and Straits Times of the 19th and even early 20th centuries provide sufficient examples of the ways in which the musics of the immigrant community here were at the extreme regarded as noises and the response to them was manifest in letters to the Editor or even subject to the Penal Code.
For instance, in Section 268, it was declared that: – *A person is guilty of a public nuisance who does any act…which causes any common injury, danger or annoyance to the public or the people in general who dwell or occupy property in the vicinity…or annoyance to persons who may have occasion to use any public right. If the inhabitants of a district are persistently annoyed a petition of house-holders to the Chief Police Officer should set the law in motion. The authority of Yahayah Merican v. Khoo Hock Leong 1878. July 29, reported in Kyshe's Reports, the Court will at the suit of a private neighbour restrain by perpetual injunction the performance of a* ***wayang*** *or* ***Chinese theatre*** *in a house adjoining his if it causes a nuisance.*[50]

Further to the Penal Code, Section XII of 1872 Summary Crimminal Jurisdiction informs us unambiguously that criminal charges befell *whoever, without the*

permission in writing of the Chief Police Officer, beats a drum or tom-tom or blows a horn or trumpet or beats or sounds any brass or other metal instrument or utensil.
EXEMPTION: This Clause shall not be held to apply to Military Music

Therefore, even when the band of the Maharajah of Travancore, engaged to play at the Hindu Thaipusam Festival in 1896, took part in the procession on January 29th, they were still arrested by the Police and locked up in a cell for two hours till bail was forthcoming and the band lost its engagements for the following nights. It had not mattered that a license was already obtained for the procession and that the offending instruments comprised a **kettle-drum, a big drum, a cornet, a bagpipe and a euphonium**. The complaint only seems to be that of using too many instruments.[51]

On the other hand, the subtext from the Singapore Free Press is that the use of instruments like ***a kettle-drum, a big drum, a cornet, a bagpipe and a euphonium*** (even before they were confiscated) was in no way dissonant with expectations of a soundscape at a religious festival like Thaipusam; that the chetties of the Tank Road Hindu Temple applied for a permit knowing the instrumentation; and more significantly, that the band of musicians had come via the good offices of no less than the Maharaja of Travancore.

There is at work, a much deeper cultural reliance on resources from India, cultural and musical, which maintain the balance between tradition and a changing presence and practice. Gregory Booth informs us that in Southern India, the musical interaction between British and Indian culture was quite enthusiastic. South Indians incorporated and adapted European instruments and musical materials to suit their own needs:
Wind bands…are a ubiquitous and sometimes perplexing phenomenon, because *their continued presence as musical symbols of status and prestige in public and private settings demonstrates an ongoing relationship with the region's colonial past, but simultaneously expresses the ability of South Asian cultures to refashion external cultural influences in ways that fit their own patterns of social organisation and suit regional cultural needs. As the political and social realities…have changed, so …have cultural needs and behaviours.*[52]

Given the evanescent Band of the Musical Society in 1874 and Santa Cecilia Band of 1896, much of what the Indian Native regimental bands were able to achieve during 19th century Singapore were intensified during the 20th century up to 1958 through the Straits Settlement Police Band, Syonan Police Band and eventually the

Police Band. Despite the similarity of presence (Punjabis from India at first and later included members of the Malay community) and delectation from its audiences, was that the Police Band was able to immerse itself by transcribing and arranging for Band, music from popular local practices. If nothing else, Alec Dixon's recalling of the efforts of Straits Settlement Police Band Director F. Minns is evidence of leadership that was able to relate to the local Malay community (and Straits Chinese community as well) via musical genres well-known and loved and practised. Their repertoire at public performances at either the Bras Basah Jail or Katong Park or the Botanic Gardens was sufficiently cosmopolitan to attract a large enough local audience.

Max Weber reminds[53] us that in the art of warfare, the greatest progress originated not in technical inventions but in transformations of the social organization of the warriors. Even during the Japanese Occupation, the Police Band re-named Syonan Police Band, with a 'local' leader in Mr. Ganda Singh, continued the sort of "evangelical" work of promoting appropriate European (Brahms and Gung'l) as well as Asian repertoire (like Japanese melodies and the Kimigayo) in familiar locations such as Waterloo Street, Hong Lim Green, Jalan Besar as well as Botanic Gardens. Although the political agenda of the Japanese colonisers was a pan-Asian consciousness, the use and usefulness of the Band in the Singaporean context was one British colonial strategy they rode on.

Much of the meteoric rise of the Band's prominence in the social and cultural fabric of cosmopolitan Singapore in the present cannot deny its motivation described by its pioneers as the **Band Project**. In 1965, the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew strongly advocated the formation of brass bands in schools. The newly-formed independent government of Singapore, in introducing the programme, recognised that the movement had great potential to engender group discipline, *esprit de corps* and a sense of national identity and valued the positive influence on public morale when school bands performed at outdoor functions and music festivals. The Ministry of Education in introducing the **Band Project** in 1966, saw as deliverables, a committed artistic and cultural endeavour, awareness and education of a general public, and a tradition that fosters a sense of national identity. Whether it was Band Music or Music for the Band, with its concomitant socio-cultural and artistic tensions, this phenomenon engendered an awareness and consciousness of the Band as a medium of cohesion, of communitarian spirit and value, a microcosm of a rugged society – resilient, prepared and unified by adversity, a bond of camaraderie and *esprit des corps*; with greater impact on the school-going community in Singapore.

The decided focus on the practice of the Band at the levels of the schools, it seems to me, provided for a galvanisation of social forces right from the very beginning; something not previously achieved in the Singaporean landscape since 1819. The competitions that were put in place in the school system, reinforced the deliverables; what was prominent in the competitions at the initial stage was the outdoor, marching and display element. Since it was begun at the school system, it had no doubt its impact on the parents and family of these school going students. It would be a matter of time when parental objections and the histrionics that accompanied these competitions would engender a transition to concert and symphonic band configurations where the band became a medium of expression of a different but nonetheless valid repertoire. I believe the principal ideas of accessibility and permeability that mark out the band resonated better under these circumstances. One of the consequences of this action was the formation of a number of wind ensembles outside the school system, from those of the tertiary institutions, like polytechnics, universities and teacher-training institutes, whose graduands were charged with the responsibility of Band training in the school system. Service Bands, like the Armed Forces, Air Force and Navy (the Police Band was already very established) were also part of the formation although they served a different function in the face of a newly independent Singapore. Community Bands as well as Bands from Corporations, like SIA or the Buddhist SOKA with its autonomous affiliations represented just a few of the proliferation of bands in the post 1965 era. None of these external groups quite matched the proliferation that was witnessed in the school going community.

The Band as new form of Empire

Gayatri Spivak informs us *certain practices of...arts in the broadest sense are said to inhabit the private sector. But institutions of...art, as well as the criticism of art, belong to the public…*[54] Multiplicity of artistic endeavour has distinguished participants of the Band in Singapore throughout its presence visually and sonically. Even in the 19th century, musicians of the Band entertained not only at official functions but also at external functions, fund-raising concerts, amateur orchestral concertising, children's concerts, and even at one stage a Town band. The performance of Handel's Messiah organised by St. Andrew's Cathedral was in no small way assisted by musical forces of a regimental band. Dance-band music was already available in Singapore from the late 1920s in major hotels as well as cabarets and sufficiently popular to be advertised in local newspapers. Diversity of collaboration and participation notwithstanding, musicians like the Punjabi bandsmen of the Straits Settlement Police Band were able to play for funerals and other such activities among the various communities in Singapore. Singapore was a centre for a film industry, financed by Ho Ah Loke, Loke Wan Tho and the Shaw

Brothers during the 1950s and 1960s. We are informed that the first Band of the Armed Forces comprised musicians whose prior musical experience was in cabarets, keronchong or Hawaiian bands or in musical practices of popular culture.

Alec Dixon's amusing account of selections from Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore and 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes' – as repertoire heard at funerals take us beyond Booth's assertion of adaptation. It is an indication of a symbiotic relationship between music and social settings no where clearer than in this context. In Karl Mannheim's words, *"Each idea acquires a new meaning when it is applied to a new life situation. When new strata take over systems of ideas from another strata, it can always be shown that the same words mean something different to the new sponsors, because these latter think in terms of different aspirations and existential configurations. This social change of function, then, is … also a change of meaning."*[55] Here it is not the words but the sounds that are the subject of this transformation. By performing what they performed, these musicians, the Band they were affiliated to, and by extension, the Band movement, in whatever state of being, all acquired a distinct nature and identity, transcending their cultural identity.

In a sense, from its reported presence in 19th century Singapore, via Indian Native Regimental or Royal Regimental or even visiting bands in the 19th century, the Straits Settlement Police Band (Punjabi in all but name), the Syonan Police Band, Band of the Singapore Police Force and later the Band Project, brainchild of the Ministry of Education, is that the Band was and is, to most intents and purposes, an institution which transformed its participants, albeit varying degrees of adaptation. Its chosen medium of expression, in this case, music, rendered it the authority of an artistic institution which historically found favour with political and military institutions. This is significant, given the variety of communities, variety of participatory strategies throughout the processes of colonisation in Singapore. Despite the changes in adapting to political, social and cultural realities, the Band in Singapore seems to have survived, if not thrived towards its prominence. I believe this is because the Band as a political and artistic institution was accorded, has been accorded and on balance deserved its spatial prominence, pervading and permeating much of the traditional and contemporary performing spaces, in terms of personnel, musical resources and musical instruments.

It would too hasty and simplistic, if not erroneous, to draw direct link between the early bands of the infantry and the band today. There is no clear line of influence although if one does trace the history of the presence of Bands in Singapore, there

emerges a "concept" or "notion" of a band, how it functioned and functions in society in site-specific ways.

There is so much more that needs to be articulated with the acknowledgement of a presence. What was the repertoire, how was it sustained, how did teaching and learning take place? What was the repertoire representative of? An analysis of the repertoire, the arrangements and transcriptions of the pieces would begin to address a correlation between the nature of such arrangements and transcriptions and the depth of available resources, instrumental and musical resources as well as skill levels of musicians, bandmasters, and possibly creative work. This research continues to redress the scarcity of photographs, concert programmes, taped recordings of concerts, financial records, letters of correspondence, among the few. Presence begs, even more questions, require far more explanation and another barrage of questions but provides the motivation for future and further scholarship.

If nothing else was learnt today, the overwhelming evidence of the presence of the Band in Singapore is a small step towards redressing the lack of a presence in the Groves entry on musics in Singapore. However, what was the nature, role and identity of its presence – a political phenomenon mediated through music or was it an artistic phenomenon mediated through a political esprit des corps? The gaps left behind especially between the Madras Native Infantry, Straits Settlement Police Band with all its evolution till one suspects 1958 and the Band Project inform us of the necessity of robust patronage for sustainability of the Band. Given the relative success of such patronage – was the Band a colonial gift so powerful that the only strategy to sustain its practice would have been to render it a political commodity in contemporary history? Tensions, contentions notwithstanding, one can no longer deny its practice, and by implication, its presence.

Acknowledgement
This paper draws from material used in the Brown Bag Session at the WASBE International Conference given on 11 July 2005 in Singapore.

REFERENCES

1 Lee Tong Soon, Singapore, volume 23, pp.421-423, p.421, in Sadie, Stanley and Tyrrell, John (eds.), The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians, New York, N.Y.: Grove's Dictionaries, 2000. 2001 edition.

2 Ibid., p.421.

3 Tan, Bernard. "Sounding Board: Music and Cultural Heritage" in Venka Purushothaman (ed.) Narratives: Notes on Cultural Journey. Singapore: National Arts Council, 2002, p.80.
4 Issue 80, April 26 1827

5 Buckley, Charles Burton, An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1965, p.216.

6 Correspondence—Letter to the editor of the Singapore Chronicle. January 22 1834. This would go some way to explain why in the records of St. Andrew's Cathedral, there are two band entries for 1834 – one for the 29th M.N.I and subsequently 23rd M.N.I

7 Singapore Chronicle, Thursday December 3rd 1829.

8 Buckley, Charles Burton, An Anecdotal History of Singapore, pp.496-497. This corroborates the entry in St. Andrew's Cathedral of the 21st Regt. M.N.I who were in Singapore fro 1846-1849.

9 The Singapore Free press Thursday 3rd September 1857.

10 The Singapore Free Press, 27 September 1846.

11 Brown. Indiscreet Memories p. xiii, in Phan, Ming Yen, Music in Empire, Western Music in 19th century Singapore through a study of selected texts, unpublished MA dissertation, Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, 2004, pp.66-68.

12 Ibid., p. 415, in Phan, op.cit., pp.66-68.

13 Singapore Free Press Thursday morning 7 December 1865.

14 Concert Pitch, 14 February 1896 Singapore Free Press.

15 "Popular Orchestral Concert." SFP, 5 April 1899.

16 "The Children's Concerts" SFP, 6 December 1898.
17 The Cathedral Monthly Paper, Vol. XV, no.171, p.3, March 1928, St. Andrew's Cathedral records.

18 Singh, Surjan (compiler and editor), They died for all free men. Supported by the National Heritage Board, Published by the Sikh Missionary Society Malaya, p.16.

19 "Paul Abisheganaden with Petrina Chan and Lim Lee Ling"op cit p. 5 in cited in Phan, Ming Yen, Music in Empire, Western Music in 19th century Singapore through a study of selected texts, unpublished MA dissertation, Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, 2004

20 Alec Dixon, Entertainment Only.

21 Police Band Programme, Syonan Times, Friday, June 17 1942.

22 Article in Radio TV Malaya Weekly, November 1958.

23 Oral interview Matthew Chua of the Mayflower Minstrel association by Dr.Daniel Chew.Reel A678, transcribed by Joy Chen, July 2004.

24 Ibid.

25 Interview with Ho Hwee Long May 29 2004.

26 Message by Chai Chong Yii, Senior Minister of State for Education, for the Bands 76 programme leaflet, , M.C. (P) No.1325/76, Printed by Tai Thong Press Singapore.

27 Tan Leng Kwang, Background to the Band Programme in Singapore Schools, Bands 76 programme leaflet, M.C. (P) No.1325/76, Printed by Tai Thong Press Singapore.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid

34 Ibid.

35 Music Bulletin, Yamaha Music (Asia) Pte. Ltd., 1973-1975.

36 I am indebted to A/P Ho Hwee Long for his loan of programme leaflets – Goodwill Performance by Secondary School Bands in Kuala Lumpur, 30 December 1971.

37 Interview with Ho Hwee Long May 29 2004.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 MOE Finance Circular for the Funding Policy for Schools (wef 1 April 2005)

41 E-correspondence with Mohd. Rasull bin Khelid.

42 Tan, Penny, A history of the band movement in Singapore, MA thesis, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 1999.

43 Interview with Ho Hwee Long May 29 2004.

44 Hilarian, Larry Francis, How Trading-Links Influence the Globalisation of Musical Cultures-The Dissemination of Lute-Type Instruments, pp. 248-277, pp.248-249, in Proceedings of the Scientific Conference: Traditional Music in Globalisation Context, Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, 2004.

45 Michel Foucault, Nietzsche, Genealogy, History, pp.369-391, in Aesthetics, method, and epistemology, Volume two, edited by James Faubion, translated by Robert Hurley et al., Penguin books, 1994, p.381.

46 Scott, ?, Letter to the Military Secretary for the Commander-in-Chief, Fort St. George, in Madras General Orders, Military Files, British Government Document, in Booth, op.cit., p.63.

47 Phan, Ming Yen, Music in Empire, op.cit., p.171.

48 Straits Times, 12 October 1886

49 Singapore Free Press(Tuesday) 31 October 1899 Disturbers of the Public Peace; Letter to the Editor.
50 Payne, Withers, C.H., The Malayan Digest, The Malayan Law Journal Office, Singapore, S.S, 1936, p.165.

51 Confiscated Drums, Singapore Free Press, 3 February 1896.

52 Booth, Gregory D. The Madras Corporation Band: A Story of social change and indigenization, Asian Music Vol. XXVIII, no.1, Fall/Winter 1996/7, pp.61-86, p.61.

53 Bourdieu, Pierre, On the possibility of a Field of World Sociology, pp.373-387, in Bourdieu, Pierre and Coleman, James, Social Theory for a Changing Society, Westview Press, USA. 1991, p.374.

54 Spivak, Gayatri, Explanation and Culture, Marginalia, in Other Worlds, p.103.

55 Karl Mannheim, “Fragments” in Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, ed. P. Kecskemeti (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968/1952), p. 188.