

REVIEW OF RESEARCH INTO THE GONDANG SABANGUNAN MUSICAL GENRE IN BATAK TOBA SOCIETY OF NORTH SUMATRA

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Tulisan ini merupakan tinjauan kritis terhadap beberapa literatur tentang masyarakat dan kebudayaan musikal masyarakat Batak, khususnya Batak Toba, di Sumatera Utara. Di samping memetakan apa yang sudah dibicarakan dan didokumentasikan, tulisan ini mengusulkan beberapa persoalan lain yang bisa diteliti sebagai kelanjutan yang sudah dilakukan.

This article reviews some sources that have contributed to the study of the society and culture of the Toba Batak people of North Sumatra, especially some early and recent research findings about the *gondang sabangunan* tradition and its associated *tortor* dancing. It aims to show what has been achieved in those studies and where the main lacunae are. The *gondang sabangunan* is a musical ensemble consisting of a set of *taganing* comprising five tuned drums: the *tingting*, the *paidua*, the *painonga*, the *paidua odap*, the *odap-odap* (single-headed drums), two bass drums comprising a *gordang* (single-headed drum), and *odap* (double-headed drum), a set of four gongs comprising the *oloan*, the *ihutan*, the *panggora*, and the *doal* (suspended gongs), a *sarune* (double-reed aerophone) and a *hesek* (a percussive piece of metal or an empty beer bottle and a spoon). Naturally, the *gondang sabangunan* and the associated *tortor* dancing must be performed simultaneously. A *gondang sabangunan* performance without *tortor* is regarded as incomplete, and inconsistent with the *adat*, the social, and religious codes.

Studies of Toba Batak Society and Culture

The study of the society and culture of the Toba Batak people of North Sumatra began in the mid-nineteenth century. Most of the early publications on the subject were authored by Dutch scholars and Dutch, and German missionaries. For example, Van der Tuuk's book entitled *A Grammar of Toba Batak* (1864-1867, reprinted in 1971) was a study of the Toba Batak language, including the script, rules of pronunciation and word structure. In 1909 Warneck published his book *Der Religion der Batak 'Batak Religion'*, which discussed the pre-Christian Toba Batak belief system. Joustra's *Batakspiegel* of 1926 presented an ethnographic description of the Batak Lands. Vergouwen's *The Social Organization and Customary Law of the Toba-Batak of Northern Sumatra*, published in 1933, and is probably the most detailed study of Toba Batak customary law (*adat*) and its practices to date. It includes discussion of pre-Christian Toba Batak religious concepts, the kinship system, clans and genealogy, political units and territory, social clan, social organization, inheritance, the marriage system, and many kinds of *adat* feasts.

Apart from early sources dealing with language and religion, some scholarly inquiries into issue of history, social change, culture, and the pre-Christian belief system appeared between the 1950's and 1990's. Keuning's *The Toba Batak, Formerly and Now* (1958) briefly investigates social and religious change among the Toba Batak people in the pre and post-independence. He argues that German missionaries of the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft began their Christian mission (*Batakmission*) in the Batak regions in the 1860's and that the Dutch government, which began to control the Batak Lands in the early 1900's, were agents of radical change in society. Castles's thesis of 1972, *The Political Life of A Sumatran Residency: Tapanuli 1915-1940*, concentrates on the study of the Toba Batak people during the colonial era (ca. late 1850s - 1942). It also provides an account of aspects of the history of North Sumatra. Parlindungan (1964), Situmorang (1993a), and Wolfram-Seifert (1987) also discuss aspects of the history of North Sumatra.

Questions about urbanization, ethnic identity, urban clan organizations, and *adat* change and continuity in post-Independent Indonesia have been discussed by Bruner in his articles "Urbanization and Ethnic Identity in North Sumatra" (1961) and "Medan: the Role of Kinship in an Indonesian City" (1963). In both articles Bruner observes that although some Toba Batak reside in Medan, a city inhabited by several cultural groups, they have maintained their kinship system well and continue to perform *adat* practices. He argues that it was the clan organizations (*punguan marga*) in the urban areas that served as the main means of maintaining their cultural identity. Bruner explains that urban Toba Batak constantly maintain close ties with their relatives in the villages, thus facilitating the continuity and unity of their patrilineal descent group. He concludes that rural and urban Toba Batak people are part of the one ceremonial and social system (Bruner 1961: 519-520; cf. 1963: 8).

Between 1989 and early 1995 I attended many weddings and pre-funeral ceremonies in Medan. They were held by the groups of people who had migrated from Samosir island and other rural villages surrounding Lake Toba to Medan. The participants consisted of a host and his neighbours, kinsmen, and kinswomen who live in Medan and rural areas, and members of his clan association in Medan. As was made clear in many ways, the status of each participant in those ceremonies was based not on where he/she came from but on how he/she was related to the host. Thus all participants who belonged to the wife-giver group, whether from a rural area or from Medan, were treated equally by the host. My findings in these respects support those of Bruner.

Cunningham's *The Post War Migration of the Toba Batak to East Sumatra* (1958) is another important study of Toba Batak socio-cultural change. As Cunningham explains, European and American companies occupied 284,000 acres of agricultural plantations in East Sumatra until 1950. After their had left, labourers from surrounding regions occupied the land. About 250,000 Toba Batak people migrated to the area. Cunningham maintains that the geographical conditions and the historical and cultural environments of the Toba Batak people simultaneously induced extensive urban migration of the people to the area during the 1950's. He concludes that urban migration was the Toba Batak's solution to the problem of improving their economic and social conditions (Cunningham 1958: 147). The Toba Batak slogan, '*hamajuon*' ('progress') motivated them in the early 1900's to achieve progress in education, economy, and social status (see Hutaauruk 1993: 71, 88-91). I contend that the drift toward urban centres for better jobs and education from 1950 is also a manifestation of *hamajuon* (cf. Aritonang 1988: 283-285).

George Sherman's *Rice, Rupee, and Ritual* of 1990 is the most recent study of society, cultural, and economic change. Sherman investigated whether or not the introduction of money, foreign penetration, and the Indonesian administration changed the set of values that shaped the Toba Batak local economic system. He concluded that the socio-economic values of the people have now changed; for example, the people now use money instead of rice as a medium of exchange. Yet change did not transform "the social values of rice", because rice remains central in Toba Batak culture. People still use it as a gift, as sustenance, and as a blessing medium in rituals, suggesting that traditional values have continued to the present time, irrespective of the transformation of the socio-economic system.

Tobing's *The Structure of The Toba-Batak Belief in the High God* (1963) and Sinaga's *The Toba-Batak High God* (1981) are two important, locally-authored publications that discuss pre-Christian Toba Batak religious beliefs. Although they both claim that members of pre-Christian Toba Batak societies believed in the High God (*Mula Jadi Na Bolon*), each of them actually has a different perception of how the pre-Christian Toba Batak societies perceived the High God. Tobing argues that *Mula Jadi Na Bolon* is immanent, that he constitutes the total cosmos and order, that he is omnipresent; and that his power is evident in that it is he to whom the people "turn for help in great disasters, [and] during ordeals ..." (Ph. Tobing 1963:35). In contrast, Sinaga argues that the Toba Batak perceive and experience the High God as being simultaneously transcendent, immanent, and symbolical (Sinaga 1981: 15-16). By 'transcendent', he means that *Mula Jadi Na Bolon* is distinct from the phenomenal world as well as the universe. By 'immanent' he means that *Mula Jadi Na Bolon* is present among his creatures and the created universe depends on him (Ibid: 15-16). *Mula Jadi na Bolon* is not only revealed in the people's imagination but is also experienced through symbols, because God is "symbolizeable" (Ibid: 43). Sinaga claims that the people experienced the existence of *Mula Jadi na Bolon* in their life

symbolically, i.e. as “spontaneous theophany” and “provoked theophany” (*Ibid*: 43-44).¹ Sinaga defines ‘spontaneous theophany’ as God manifesting himself spontaneously without the cooperation of human beings, namely through power, energy, life, and fertility, which are the elements of the world. ‘Provoked theophany,’ he defines as the invocation of God, with some help from human beings via myths, words, statues, places, rites, and objects used in rituals (*Ibid*: 43-44).

In their theoretical discussion, Tobing and Sinaga omitted mention of belief in ancestral spirit beliefs. This belief was pervasive in pre-Christian Toba Batak societies—and still is among some Christians and the present-day animists. This is because the two authors focused their discussion on belief in the High God. Ancestral veneration is evident in many *adat* practices: e.g. in the exhumation of bones ceremonies and the *tugu* feasts, during which people worship their ancestral spirits. The fact that this is so suggests that *Mula Jadi Na Bolon* is not central to pre-Christian Toba Batak belief.

Research into the history of Christian missions and their impact on the people and their culture have been dealt with by both local and foreign authors. Kraemer’s *From Mission Field to Independent Church* (1958) contains a section on the Christianization of the Toba Batak people. It is an outsider response to the rapid material and psychological changes among the Toba Batak, changes that resulted from tension felt between the missionaries and the people. While admiring the missionaries’ method of Christianizing the Toba Batak people—in his view it “belongs to the finest results of missionary activity in modern times” (Kraemer 1958: 43) he disagrees with the strategy which the missionaries employed to educate the people. The missionaries educated the people in order to facilitate their Christian mission but not to empower the people intellectually to enable them to raise their social awareness and improve their living conditions. He maintained that the missionaries desired to produce a strong Christian community and a strong Church but had a lesser desire to establish strongly Christian behavior among the people (Kraemer 1958: 68-69). Tension did indeed result from the desire of the people to achieve *hamajuon*. Yet the German missionaries deserve much credit, for they did lay a strong educational foundation among the people.

Pedersen’s *Batak Blood and Protestant Soul* (1970) presents an account of the development of the ethnic Protestant Church in Toba Batak society (ca. 1860s - 1960s). He notes that in 1930 the Batak subgroups (Toba Batak, Simalungun Batak, Mandailing/Angkola, Sipirok Batak, and Pakpak Batak), established the Batak church called *Huria Kristen Batak Protestant* (H.K.B.P.—Christian Protestant Batak Church)’ and planned to make it the only Batak church institution in the Batak Lands. Thus for ten years (1930-1940) the members of H.K.B.P. struggled to liberate themselves from the authority of the German missionaries. Pedersen explains that although members of the H.K.B.P. finally obtained their sovereignty from the missionaries in 1940, their wish to make the H.K.B.P. the single Batak church did not come true. This was because of an internal conflict which occurred in the late 1940’s. The Simalungun Batak, the Karo Batak, the Pakpak Batak, and the Mandailing Batak congregations disagreed with the idea that the H.K.B.P. should represent all Batak subgroups. Each ethnic group requested that it be allowed to establish its own autonomous status church organization. This situation was complicated by the fact that other church institutions and evangelists from different denominations (e.g. Catholic, Methodist, Pentecost and Adventist), began to proselytize in the area the people in the early 1920’s. Their presence actually minimized the opportunity for the H.K.B.P. to preside over one single Batak church. As Pedersen concludes, the failure to achieve a single Protestant church was due to each group requesting a separate ethnic church and the fact that other denominations, such as the Catholic, Methodist, Pentecost, and Adventist, were actively proselytizing too.

Pedersen noted that in the 1970’s forty church institutions were registered by the Department of Religion at Medan. The H.K.B.P. (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestant*—Protestant Christian Toba Batak Church’), H.K.B.P.A (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestant Angkola*—Protestant Christian Angkola Batak Church’), G.K.P.S (*Gereja Kristen Protestant Simalungun*—Protestant Christian Simalungun Church’), G.B.K.P (*Gereja Batak Karo Protestant*—Protestant Karo Batak Church’), G.S.P (*Gereja Simerkata Pakpak*—Protestant Pakpak Church’) were the names of some

¹ Various myths of creation are found in *Makna Wibawa Jabatan Dalam Gereja Batak*, by Lumbantobing (1992); *The Structure of the Toba Batak High God*, by Philip L. Tobing (1956); and *The Toba-Batak High-God*, by Anicetus B. Sinaga (1981).

of the church institutions were based on—and are still based on—ethnic divisions. In contrast, the H.K.I (*Huria Kristen Indonesia*—'Christian Indonesian Church'), G.K.P.I (*Gereja Kristen Protestant Indonesia*—'Protestant Christian Indonesian Church'), G.M.I (*Gereja Methodist Indonesia*—'Methodist Indonesian Church') were the names of the Protestant sects divided on the basis of nationalism rather than ethnicity. It is important to note that these institutions differ from one another not in the doctrine which they practice, but in the fact that the vernacular used in church services. While those that emphasize a sense of ethnic group use the relevant ethnic language in their Sunday services, those that emphasize a sense of nationalism use the Indonesian language more often than the relevant ethnic language. Unlike in the West, where the divisions between Protestant churches are based on religious interpretation (for example, Methodist, Pentecost, and Lutheran), the division between Protestant churches among the Toba Batak people are based only on the language of the services.

Another study related to the topic of Christianization in the Batak Lands is Schreiner's thesis of 1972—*Adat und Evangelium*—which was translated into Indonesian by Naipospos in the book entitled *Adat dan Injil - 'Adat and the Gospel'* (1994) and widely read. It discusses the meaning of *adat* from a Christian perspective. He denied that *adat* can be Christianized (*dikristenkan*), because, to him, *adat* is fundamentally a matter of worshipping ancestral spirits. Yet he admitted that *adat* can still be practiced by Christians as long as it is accepted purely as a set of social norms. He believed that *adat* must be liberated from its pre-Christian religious contexts, and to do this, the Christian should confront *adat* with the Gospel, which does not know *adat*.

Studies on North Sumatra Music with Special Reference to *Gondang-tortor* Tradition

In her introduction to a chapter on music in the book entitled *Culture and Societies of North Sumatra* (1987), Kartomi observes that "... the music of the province of North Sumatra was until recently almost total musicological terra incognita... Only in the past fifteen years or so [has] the music of the coastal and inland peoples of North Sumatra begun to be studied in detail ... (Kartomi 1987: 333). Indeed, until the late 1960's, scholarly publications on Batak and other North Sumatran music cultures in Indonesian or Western languages were very few. Not until the early 1970's has detailed ethnomusicological research into the music of Sumatra including *gondang sabangunan* begun to attract the attention of local and foreign scholars.

Among the very few existing musicological studies of North Sumatran ritual music and dance, the following publications deserve special mention. In her study "Batak Dance" (1971), Holt described various dances, including the Toba Batak *tortor*, but only very briefly. In his Ph.D. thesis (1981), Jansen described the musical instruments of the Simalungun Bataks' *gonrang* ensemble, including an analysis of the *gonrang's* musical structure, description of its historical context and musical function in Simalungun Batak society. Kartomi's several articles on North Sumatran musical traditions include "Lovely When Heard From Afar" (1981), an article which discusses the concept of beauty in Mandailing Batak musical traditions. Her other 1981 article, entitled "Ceremonial Music of Mandailing Raja Tradition" explored the history of Mandailing drum ensembles: i.e. the *gordang sembilan* 'nine drum ensemble', the *gordang lima* 'five drum ensemble' and the *gondang dua* 'two drums ensemble'; it included analysis of the rhythmic structures and social functions of the main ritual repertoire. In addition she published another article (1987) on the musical tradition of the *Pasisir* Malay people of the west coast of Sumatra, in which she analyses the influence of Western (Portuguese) music elements--especially melodic and harmonic on local song for weddings and other rituals. In his Ph.D. thesis of 1979 entitled *Melayu Music of North Sumatra*, Goldsworthy presented an account of the stratification of the Malay music of the east coast of North Sumatra, arguing that the music exists in several religion-historical layers, i.e. pre-Islamic, Islamic, and post Portuguese, each of which is distinguished by specific characteristics obtained from distinctive historical periods. The present author's S1 (Bachelor degree) thesis of 1986 was entitled *Sarune Bolon Simalungun: Suatu Analisa Penyajian Melodi oleh Tiga Musisi*, ('Sarune [double-reed aerophone] of the Simalungun People: An Analysis of a Musical Presentation by Three Musicians'); it explored the playing technique of three highly-regarded *sarune* musicians and analysed their styles of musical ornamentation.

This author's M.A. thesis, entitled *Gordang Sambilan: Social Function and Rhythmic Structure* (1988), explored the social function of the *gordang sembilan* ensemble among the

Mandailing people at Pakantan and Tamiang, South Tapanuli, analyzing the role of the master drummer in its music-making. Moore's Ph.D. thesis of 1985, entitled *Songs of the Pakpak of North Sumatra*, discussed Pakpak song categories based on social use and functions, subdividing the song categories into functional classes such as lullabies and songs to lighten the load of work, such as collecting benzoin. She then analyses the poetic and musical elements of each song class as well as the style and methods of voice production. Thus, scholarly investigation into the *gondang-tortor* tradition began only from the early 1970's.

Early personal accounts of Toba Batak music and dance appeared from the 1880's, the best of which is Gustav Pilgram's article, "Referat über heidnische Musik und Tanz" (Paper on Heathen Music and Dance) (1885). A comparison of Pilgram's description with that of Siahaan in his book, *Gondang dohot Tortor Batak* ('The Batak Gondang and Tortor') (1953) provides valuable information about change in the *gondang-tortor* tradition between the 1880's and 1950's respectively. Neither of these publications, however, is grounded on a theoretical perspective.

Pilgram's article describes the use of the *gondang* and *tortor* in pre-Christian Toba Batak society. Although it is but a brief personal report, it reflects how some German missionaries conceived of the *gondang* tradition. Lumbantobing, a Toba Batak theologian, translated this article into the Toba Batak language and embodied it in his book *Parsorion (Riwayat Hidup) ni Missionar Gustav Pilgram Dohot Harararat ni HaKristenon di Toba* (The Autobiography of Gustav Pilgram and the Spread of Christianity in Toba), published in 1981. Pilgram briefly described the musical instruments and the performance practice of the *gondang sabangunan* which, as he described, was used for worshipping ancestral spirits and other supernatural powers under the direction of the traditional medicine men (*datu*), who also engaged in magical practices. Pilgram mentioned that the people also employed the music for social functions, such as celebrating the birth of a newborn baby, expressing joyful on happy occasions, expressing sorrow at funerals, or honouring and welcoming respected guests. Although he could not tolerate *gondang-tortor* tradition associated with spirit-belief, he accepted that *gondang-tortor* performances served a useful social function. In this regard, he disagreed with other missionaries, who believed that the *gondang-tortor* tradition should be systematically eliminated from the life of the people. He actually approved of the use of the *gondang* and *tortor* at social functions as long as they had been consecrated by missionaries or church elders beforehand. However he believed that the Christianised Toba Batak must not borrow, or use, any musical ensemble sets that had been employed to venerate ancestral spirits; nor, according to him, should Christianized Toba Batak perform *gondang* music together with non-Christians. Pilgram is an example of a Christian missionary who tried to find compromises with those who demanded the destruction of the *gondang-tortor* tradition.

Siahaan's book *Gondang dohot Tortor Batak* offers basic information about the *gondang* and *tortor*, mentioning terms used for elements of music and dance, and describing several ceremonial feasts with *gondang* performances, together with the titles and meanings of *gondang* pieces. He listed titles of seventy *gondang* pieces and gave a brief account of how people should dance the *tortor* to the accompaniment of each *gondang* piece. He also referred to a series of eight *gondang* pieces that the pre-Christian Toba Batak elders used to request at every *gondang* performance, thus showing how a specific *gondang* piece was always used to worship a particular god. Throughout his publication, Siahaan endeavored to encourage the use of the *gondang* as a tool with which to express cultural sentiments. He criticized the 50-year prohibition by German missionaries and the similar 50-year Dutch government prohibition from performing the *gondang* on the ground that the *gondang* and *tortor* were interfering with the spread of Christianity.

Siahaan believed that two *tortor* movements, *tortor juangga di langit* and *tortor pangodotodot*, should not be practised. In the former, the male or female dancer's hands are stretched up above ear level, as if she/he declared that she/he is the greatest. In the latter, the dancer's palms--which are normally raised to chest level--are pushed downward repeatedly, as if the dancer looks down other people. These movements were socially unacceptable because they implied arrogance. At no time during my fieldwork in 1991, 1992, and 1994 did I witness the performance of such *tortor* movements. According to one of my informants, Marsius Sitohang²,

dancers avoid them not only because they imply arrogance but also because are associated with trance and the consequent loss of emotional control, of which the church does not approve.

Siahaan emphasized the problem that the *gondang-tortor* tradition was used in spirit belief practices and concluded therefore that many of its performance rules could not be accepted in Christian circles. He recommended that the musical performance practice of the music be revised according to Christian precepts. In so doing, however, he could not offer a solution to the problem of how to make *gondang-tortor* performances accord with Christian teaching.

In his 1977 articles, "Suku Batak dengan 'Gondang Batak'-nya" (Batak People and their Gondang Ensembles), the Toba Batak musicologist Liberty Manik provided a basic description of the *gondang sabangunan*. Manik described the typical rhythmic structures of the gong patterns; he argued that the "syncopation" resulting from the rhythmic dialogue between the gongs is a distinctive character of *gondang sabangunan* music. He also asserted that in the distant past, the *taganing* and *sarune* players were the two leading musicians in the *gondang sabangunan* ensemble, for they alone were believed to be the representatives of the gods. Ceremonial participants normally referred to the *taganing* players as *Batara Guru Humundul* and the *sarune* player as *Batara Guru Manguntal*.³

Some detailed scholarly investigations into the *gondang sabangunan* have recently been carried out by students and staff of the Ethnomusicology Discipline in the Faculty of Arts, University of North Sumatra (*Universitas Sumatra Utara*). Pasaribu's thesis of 1986 entitled *Taganing Batak Toba: Suatu Kajian Dalam Konteks Gondang Sabangunan* ('Analysis of the Batak *Taganing's* Role in the Context of the Gondang Sabangunan Ensemble') discussed the function of the *taganing*, a leading instrument within the *gondang sabangunan*, as well as the social status of the musicians. Pasaribu included a section that explored the social functions of the ensemble among three Toba Batak religious institutions: i.e. the *Parbaringin*, the *Parmalim*, and the *Siraja Batak*, showing how the religious ideology of the three institutions being fundamentally rooted in pre-Christian Toba Batak belief systems. He argued that the three groups honour *gondang* musicians as media who can convey requests to the gods via the music they perform. Pasaribu delimited his topic by excluding musical and functional changes resulting from the advent of Christianity and colonialism.

In identifying the melodic structure of *gondang* music, Pasaribu correctly pointed out that the parts played on the *taganing* and *sarune* are "heterophonic-polytonal," that *gondang* music is polytonal and its texture linear and heterophonic. Despite this useful interpretation, Pasaribu failed to provide information about how local *gondang* musicians conceive of the parts played on the two instruments.

Another contribution from USU was made by Hutasuhut. In his thesis entitled *Analisis Pola Penggarapan Taganing (Pola Sticking) oleh Tujuh Partaganing* ('The Analysis of Sticking Patterns of Seven Taganing Drum Players') (1990), his main aim was to distinguish playing techniques of the *taganing* as used by seven *taganing* players. By transcribing the pieces played by the seven musicians, Irwansyah showed how one musician had influenced the playing technique of other musicians. The most important finding of Hutasuhut was that some verbal expressions are used in the process of teaching and learning the music. By applying the Western conventional notation system, Hutasuhut documented every expression he discovered in musical notation.

Some of Irwansyah's assertion need to be questioned, however. In his discussion of the process of music-making, Irwansyah maintained that the *taganing* players either follow (*mengikuti*) or imitate (*menirukan*) the melody performed by the *sarune* players. However, he failed to supply the musical evidence to prove this notion. In my opinion, it is not appropriate to use the two words to describe the relationship between the two instruments players. Because the words *mengikuti* ('to follow') and *menirukan* ('to imitate') suggest that the *taganing* is a subordinate instrument to the *sarune*. These words imply that the *taganing* is a secondary instead of the primary lead instrument. Irwansyah has not considered the philosophical meaning of the

² I interviewed Marsius Sitohang, a *gondang* musicians from Medan, in July 1994. Several times we performed the *gondang* together and discussed many aspects of the *gondang* tradition.

³ 'Batara Guru' is one of the *Debata na tolu* ('three-gods').

religious, indeed deifying status which people assign to both musicians, namely *batara guru manguntal* for the *sarune* players and *batara guru humundul* for the *taganing* players. As I understand the religious meaning of the terms, they imply equality of status and responsibility in the ensemble as well as in the process of music-making. *Batara Guru* is the name of a deity in Toba Batak belief who, according to the myth of creation, passed on the *gondang* music to the people. This aspect is not explored in Irwansyah's thesis. I argue against Irwansyah's view that the *taganing* and the *sarune* are both primary leading instruments that perform *gondang* melodies independently. In other words, the *taganing* players neither follow nor imitate the *sarune* players.

Gultom's thesis of 1990 entitles "Suatu Studi Deskriptif dan Musikologis Upacara Gondang Saem di Desa Paraduan" ('A Descriptive and Musicological Study of the Gondang Saem Ceremony in the Village of Paraduan') described a healing ceremony, *gondang saem*, conducted by a *datu* of the Christian village of Paraduan. The ceremony was accompanied by the *gondang sabangunan* to accompany dancing and the presentation of offerings to ancestral spirits and to induce spirit possession. Such a healing ceremony, according to Gultom's investigation, is ineffective unless spirit possession occurs during the ceremony, which aims to cure someone who has been mentally ill for quite a long time and for whom modern medical treatments have proven difficult to obtain or useless. She concludes that the traditional treatment of diseases by appealing to the ancestral spirits via ceremonial feasts led by a *datu* are still found to be effective, even among Christian adherents who still firmly hold to belief in the ancestral spirit world via the religious and magical functions of the *gondang sabangunan* performances.

This author's article of 1989 entitled "Mangido Gondang dalam Penyajian Gondang Sabangunan Pada Masyarakat Batak Toba" ('Requesting Gondang Pieces in the Performance of the Gondang Sabangunan in Toba Batak Society') compared some ceremonial speeches presented by members of three different religious groups. i.e. Protestants, Catholics, and *Parmalim*. I argue that one's religious ideology influences how one makes a request for specific *gondang* pieces and how one delivers ceremonial speeches. Some Protestants address God with the words *Amanta Debata* ('our father, God), but refuse to employ the term *Ompunta Mula Jadi Na Bolon* ('the great beginning of Genesis'). This term is used by both the Catholics and *Parmalim* in delivering speeches as well as in requesting *gondang* pieces during ceremonial feasts. The reason for this is that pre-Christian Toba Batak societies used the latter term to address their gods; hence it is not regarded as being suitable for Christian use. Similarly, some Protestants do not attach the latter term to the title of the *gondang* piece they request but substitute the former term, using the words: *Gondang Somba tu Amanta Debata* ('Gondang to honour our God). This practice has become a moral responsibility for some Protestant parishioners.

The German theologian Schreiner (1970), the German ethnomusicologist Simon (1984; 1993), and the Japanese ethnomusicologist Okazaki (1994), have also made significant contributions to the study of the social and religious functions of the *gondang sabangunan*. Schreiner's article, entitled *Gondang -Musik als Überlieferungs-gestalt alt-völkischer Lebensordnung*⁴ of 1970, serves as an excellent introduction to the social and religious functions of the *gondang sabangunan*. Schreiner argued that *gondang* and ceremony are inseparable from the social life of the people and ancestor worship. He noted that the early Christian missionaries at first tolerated the *gondang* but the church finally prohibited the Christians from performing it. This has resulted in conflicts that occurred among the church ministers as well as between the church ministers and their congregations. The conflict centred around whether or not ritual practices, including *gondang sabangunan*, could be accepted in Christian teaching according to the Order of Discipline. As he mentioned, it was not until 1940 that the attitude of the church ministers towards pre-Christian ritual practices finally changed. In 1952, the church allowed its congregations to perform *gondang* and *tortor* as well as to practice certain ritual ceremonies, as long as they were not associated with spirit belief systems. Schreiner introduced these problems with clarity in his article. The question remains, however, as to why the church ruled that those ritual practices, including the religious performance of the *gondang sabangunan*, did not have to be abandoned after all. This question was not explored by Schreiner's investigation. Depicting the situation of *gondang* performance in the 1970's, he said (in Timmer's translation) that:

⁴ The article was made available by Ashley Turner, a doctoral student of the Music Department, Monash University. It was translated into English by Erna Louis Timmer, formerly a lecturer at Nommensen University in Medan.

The problem that occurs today [1970's] is that *gondang* and ancestor worship are at present reuniting as a reaction to the initial measures that attempted to separate them (Schreiner 1970: 400).

Schreiner mentioned two equivalent terms, 'gondang riang-riang' and 'gondang ribur-ribur' which he translated literally as 'gondang for a celebration', 'tunes', or '*gondang* pieces'. Schreiner mentioned that the terms were first proposed by the German missionaries in the early 1900's. In the synod meeting of 1952, the terms were employed as substitutes for any activity in a ceremonial feast that was associated with the spirit belief system. In my experience, the terms really refer to the quality or the content of a ceremonial feast. I will explain this matter further in the discussion of *gondang sabangunan* in the 'Order of Disciplines' of the church below.

Simon's article of 1984 entitled "Functional Changes in Batak Traditional Music and Its Role in Modern Indonesian Society" briefly discussed the transformation of social and religious functions of the *gondang sabangunan* in the early 1980's. He argued that although some Toba Batak live in cities away from their homelands and other reside in villages, they constantly communicate with each other through family meetings in ceremonial feasts that allow kinship relationships and ritual practices to remain intact. Simon observed that rituals performed among urban Toba Batak today are usually shortened and people's knowledge of the rules of ritual practices are fading; meanwhile the ability of some urban Toba Batak people to dance the *tortor* has also declined. Simon maintained that the original cycle of seven *gondang* pieces (*sipitu gondang*) has also been shortened to six, or five, or even three pieces and their religious meaning curtailed. Simon concluded that rules for the performance of ritual practices that were formally strictly applied are no longer carried out. I agree with these observations. However, it remains important to consider, as we shall in this thesis, whether Simon's view of the reason for the decline of the people's knowledge of ritual is true, or whether the people are actually restricted from performing the pre-Christian *adat* practices (e.g. performing the series of seven *gondang* pieces or the calling for the blessings on a *gondang* performance) by the external forces, such as the Order of Discipline of the church. In his other article of 1987 entitled "Social and Religious Functions of Batak Ceremonial Music," Simon briefly explored the nature of the social and the religious functions of the *gondang sabangunan*. He argued that *gondang* is performed to accompany dancing of the *tortor*, for music and dance strengthen kinship relationships. He further argued that in spirit belief practice (*tondi* cults), both *gondang* and *tortor* function as tools to express religious feelings and to help dancers achieve possession. Simon admitted that the nature of the belief systems as well as the inner intention of the dancers is fundamental to the process of spirit possession, but he believed that the structure of *gondang* music, especially the rhythmic pattern of the *ogung* ('gong'), actually encourages dancers to achieve possession. Simon maintained that according to the rules of *gondang* performance a series of seven *gondang* must be performed in honour of one kinship group, and it must begin with *Gondang Mula-mula* and end with *Gondang Hasahatan*. The other five pieces may change according to the character of the ceremony or the wish of persons who request for the five *gondang* pieces.

I agree with Simon that the series of seven *gondang* pieces must be performed when a group of people follows the *adat ni gondang* (rules of *gondang* performance). The problem is that *adat ni gondang* is not merely concerned with the series of seven *gondang* pieces but covers all aspects of *gondang* performance practice, including how to invite *gondang* musicians to play, how to start and end a *gondang* performance, how to dance the *tortor*, how to bestow and receive blessings via the *tortor*, how to request a *gondang-tortor* sequence, and how to address *gondang* musicians. In addition, the rules for performing *gondang* are not unchangeable; they change as people change. Thus changes and continuities in *adat ni gondang* are still traceable in contemporary *gondang* performances.

Simon's 1993 article entitled "Gondang, Gods, and Ancestors: Religious Implications of Batak Ceremonial Music" briefly investigated a possible correlation between *gondang sabangunan*, the Toba Batak belief systems, and the construction of the Toba Batak traditional house, the *ruma*. In describing the use of *gondang* pieces, he mentioned the role that musicians perform within the context of ritual ceremonies: i.e. that *gondang* pieces are titled after the names of gods or ancestors, and that *gondang* musicians are regarded as representations of one god or ancestor (*Batara Guru*). As Simon explains, the Toba Batak cosmos consists of three worlds: the upperworld (*banua ginjang*), the middleworld (*banua tonga*), and the underworld

(*banua toru*), which are reflected in the three parts of the construction of the Toba Batak traditional house, namely the ground space, the dwelling space, and the gable roof. He pointed out that during ceremonial feasts *gondang* musicians perform music under the gable roof, called *bonggar-bonggar*, to accompany people dancing on the ground, "... as if musicians play the music from the upper world" (Simon 1993: 82). On the basis of this assumption, Simon stated that Toba Batak people regard music "... as a god-given mediator between the upper and the middle World, blessed with godly power ... *The pargonsi* is the god-given mediator between gods and people ... " (Simon 1993: 82). These clues are, indeed, important in understanding how the Toba Batak regards *gondang* music and musicians.

Simon asserted that if a Christian family organizes a ceremonial feast with a performance of *gondang sabangunan* and they request the *gondang somba-somba tu Amanta Debata* 'gondang for worshipping the God' to be played, they are actually making their request of the Christian God. As he writes, "... it seems ... that the Toba easily switch from the old Batak gods to the Christian High God, just dropping the full name; the music is the same" (Simon 1993: 82). This is correct as far as the titles of the *gondang* pieces are concerned. But Simon failed to take account of the actual diversity of Christian Toba Batak responses to the adoption of Christian ideas. In fact when Protestants perform the *gondang sabangunan*, i.e. they request specific *gondang* pieces to be played, they dance the *tortor*, and they give and receive blessings; but in so doing they actually communicate a whole range of Christian ideas. Some Protestant Toba Batak switch from the old Batak gods to the Christian God, as Simon observed, however others make their requests of the Christian God as well as the ancestral spirits via *gondang* performances. Simon did not take account of the people's incorporation of Christian ideas into pre-Christian traditions and vice versa.

In 1984, Simon published a pair of discs of *gondang sabangunan* music with jacket notes that included musical transcriptions and analyses, descriptions of the instruments, and a brief discussion of the social and religious functions of the *gondang sabangunan*. These are useful contributions to the study of the musical structures of *gondang* composition. In using the term 'Christianized rituals', Simon means ceremonial feasts that were formerly rooted in pre-Christian belief systems and practices and were then reinterpreted and performed according to Christian teachings. However, he fails to explain what aspects of ceremonial feasts have been specifically singled out for Christianization. In referring to the "gondang suitable for Christian use" he suggests that there are *gondang* pieces that are not suitable for Christian use, without specifying which ones.

The most recent study of the *gondang sabangunan* was a thesis by Okazaki entitled *Music, Identity, and Religious Change among the Toba Batak People of North Sumatra* (1993). Okazaki focused her topic on *gondang* within Toba Batak society, particularly *gondang* practises which have been under the influence of Christianity. Thus she presented a wealth of data which she collected at *gondang* performances within *adat* feasts and church ritual services and feasts performed by members of two of the Christian institutions operating in rural and urban areas, namely the Protestant and the Catholic. Her aim was to investigate how the *gondang* and *tortor* tradition has adapted to the changing Toba Batak society and how *gondang* performances shaped and strengthened Toba Batak identity in the changing world. To achieve this she analyzed the impact of religious change upon the use of the *gondang* in society, namely, *gondang* in *adat* ceremonies, church functions, and entertainment events. She examined how and for what purposes, people perform *gondang* and *tortor* in different contexts and at different times. She investigated how people convey their cultural and religious expressions through *gondang* and *tortor*.

She acknowledged that the Protestant Toba Batak and the Catholic Toba Batak church institutions each have their own individual policy towards the local culture that guides its members in using the *gondang* as well as in performing *adat* practices. Despite her acknowledgment, Okazaki has not however considered how that policy has influenced the attitude of the Catholics and the Protestants in executing *gondang-tortor* performances in *adat* feasts. Okazaki simply assumed that the features of *gondang* performance in *adat* feasts, including content, purpose, and performance procedure is the same whether it is hosted by the Protestants or is hosted by the Catholics. Okazaki explained that in the exhumation of bones ceremonies nowadays, the religious elements, such as calling the spirits or asking blessings from the ancestral spirits have been reduced, due to church prohibition. She observed that in the process of consulting the *datu*, performing the *gondang* while digging the graves, removing the bones, and

bringing the bones in procession from the graves into the host's house to the accompaniment of the *gondang* remains an integral part of the procedure of the exhumation of bones ceremonies. As regards the exhumation of bones ceremony held by a Catholic family which I witnessed at Palipi, Samosir, in July 1989 and other Catholic ceremonies, Okazaki is correct. However, the Protestants no longer practice such a procedure and they do not perform *gondang* in the process of digging up the bones the Protestant church has officially banned them from 1952 to the present time.

The Protestant church does allow its members to exhume their ancestral bones, but practitioners must obey church law. (See the discussion of the Order of Discipline in chapter five). When I attended the exhumation of bones ceremonies held by a Protestant family at Hutaraja, Sipaholon, in 1994, the process of digging up the bones was executed without the *datu*. The host hired a brass band ensemble to accompany the process of unearthing the bones. Musical items performed were Christian hymns and Batak popular songs. Unearthed bones were put into boxes and kept in the church. They were brought from the graves to the church without musical accompaniment. In the church, all the bones were placed on the floor in front of the altar. Before removing the bones from the church, the church minister led a Christian service, including sermon, prayers, and hymn singing to the accompaniment of a brass band. When members of the host transferred the bones from the church to the front of the host's house, the brass band musicians performed Batak popular songs. The boxed bones were placed on a table. The host and relatives danced the *tortor* surrounding that table to the accompaniment of a brass band that performed Christian hymns. The day after the bones were transferred to their *tambak* 'tomb', the host gave a family feast in which *gondang* and *tortor* were performed. In the same year I also attended an exhumation of bones ceremony at Medan, held by a Protestant family. There was no *gondang* music during the process of digging up the bones, but a Christian service was led by a church minister. The bones were transferred from the grave directly to the church. The host gave a family *adat* feast, in which *gondang* and *tortor* were performed, yet no bones were placed in the arena where the participants of the feast danced the *tortor*.

Okazaki was unable to supply evidence of the use of the *gondang* in *adat* feasts, especially the use of the *gondang* in exhumation of bones ceremonies held according to the Protestant practice. Her data are concerned mainly with *gondang* performance in church services and feasts and in concert situation. Okazaki's description of the procedure is incomplete and may therefore to some extent lead to misconceptions, on the reader's part especially with regard to the Protestant Toba Batak. In other words, Okazaki's description of *gondang* performance procedure at the exhumation of bones ceremony in question cannot be applied to the Protestants.

Okazaki's conclusion contributes some invaluable findings: they reveal some social and religious aspects of *gondang-tortor* performances among all Christian Toba Batak people, whether Protestant or Catholic. She asserts that the purpose of the *gondang* presentation within the 'ceremonial framework' or 'the structure of ceremonial organization' of *adat* feast, among other things, is to worship deities. She correctly claims that 'all *adat* feasts' accompanied by *gondang* these days retain some elements of the structure of the ceremonial organization rooted in the traditional Toba Batak belief system. She then concludes that the ceremonial framework of *gondang* in *adat* feasts is "more or less standardized ..." (Okazaki 1994: 258). Likewise, her investigations into the function of *gondang* and *tortor* performances in *adat* ceremonies offer significant points that merit mention here. She maintains that *gondang* serves as a ritual enactment which provides a link to the past. She asserts that *gondang* and *tortor* evince religious and cultural values. She mentions that through *gondang* and *tortor* the people show respect and honour to deities and prestigious persons, acknowledge proper position and kinship relationships, and bestow blessings through speeches, dance and ceremonial gift-giving. Supported by her "multi-contextual approach" or comparative method of analysis, Okazaki tried to encapsulate the meaning of contemporary *gondang* performances as follows:

My analysis of *gondang* performance... uncovers the multiplicity of meanings that *gondang* conveys. Some meanings overlap and some very markedly, but when stripped to the essential, they reveal the Toba Batak dependence on the past and desire for the new (Okazaki 1993: 258)

Despite this convincing conclusion, the question remains as to whether or not it applies only to the *gondang-tortor* performance among Catholic or also to the Protestant Toba Batak community. *Adat* feasts among the Protestants have been influenced by Christian practices, as has the *gondang-tortor* performance. Thus since the musical performance practices of that community are constantly regulated by the Order of Discipline of the church, I need to question how *gondang* and *tortor* performance in *adat* feasts held by the Protestant Toba Batak community can serve all of the functional aspects that Okazaki mentioned. To what degree have Christian teaching and values influenced, and contributed to, the functional aspects and ceremonial framework? Okazaki has not analysed these issues thoroughly and indeed she failed to supply relevant evidence. Likewise, the diametrical opposition between *adat* and Christian teaching and how the Protestant church and its members have had to compromise about this relationship has not been discussed in Okazaki's thesis.

Okazaki argues that the incorporation of *gondang* in the Catholic church liturgy and the performance of *gondang* in church functions (Catholic and Protestant), serve as evidence of the reconciliation between Christianity and *adat*. There is no question that the recent change in perception of the Catholic church as regards the *gondang* tradition, is significant; the *gondang* tradition is, indeed, consciously encouraged by the leaders of the Catholic church via the injunction of "inculturation". This attempt to incorporate local culture into the Catholic liturgy is in line with the Guidelines of the Vatican Council II (1962-65).

It is, indeed, indisputable that the Catholic church has incorporated the *gondang* into its activities more than the Protestant church which uses the *gondang* to a limited degree only. In describing this development, however, Okazaki overstates the degree of reconciliation reached by the church with adherents of the *gondang sabangunan* tradition. Thus I cannot fully agree with her statement that "Today, the church promotes the practice and has become a protector of the *gondang* tradition" (Okazaki 1994:177).

My investigations suggest that the Catholic and Protestant churches have promoted, and to an extent protected Western organ music, church hymns and brass bands over traditional local music such as the *gondang sabangunan*. No Protestant church has ever acquired a *gondang sabangunan* ensemble, let alone a group of *gondang* musicians. Similarly, only one Catholic church--at Karangari in Pematang Siantar--has ever owned a *gondang* ensemble with temporary musicians. Protestant churches do not use the *gondang* in church services, only at church functions such as an anniversary of a church (*pesta ulang tahun*), fund-raiser (*pesta pembangunan*), youth festival (*pesta naposo*), the founding of a new church building (*pajonjong gareja*), and the celebration of a new church (*mangompoi*) which occurs once or twice a year. Some Catholic churches do incorporate the *gondang* into their music liturgy but not at every Sunday service, only in celebration of Thanksgiving, Easter, or Christmas.⁵ Some Catholic churches never perform the *gondang* in their liturgy at all. Nainggolan, a *sarune* player and a member of the Catholic church at Jalan Pancing/Durung, Medan, informed me that since the time the *gondang sabangunan* began to be played in church, he has only performed once, which was during the celebration of Easter in 1992. When I interviewed him in 1994, he said that between 1992 and 1994 there were no *gondang* performances in his church. Thus, the Catholics are still experimenting. Therefore, it is too soon to say that the church institutions, whether Catholic and/or Protestant, are the protectors of the *gondang* tradition. We can only state that musical adherents of the *gondang* tradition are now trying to make the Toba Batak Protestant and Catholic churches look, act and sound like Toba Batak churches.

Okazaki observed that *gondang* in a church context demonstrates the dialectical relationship between the people's cultural values and what the church offers. This is true as regards the incorporation of the *gondang-tortor* tradition into the Catholic liturgy, and Okazaki has indeed provided a useful extensive discussion of the issue. My fieldwork data suggest a different perspective about *gondang* in the Protestant church context. When *gondang* and *tortor* performances are performed in Protestant church functions, *adat*, including rules for performing *gondang* are never stronger than church law. In other words, the dialectical relationship in question rarely occurs, because *adat* and rules pertaining to that performance must be consistent

⁵ This is according to Father Benjamin Purba of Karangari, Pematang Siantar, whom I interviewed in December 1994. He is the Director of the Liturgical Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Medan.

with church law. On the other hand, that dialectical relationship occurs mostly when *gondang* and *tortor* are performed in *adat* feasts, which Okazaki never mentions at all.

Okazaki's discussion on traditional form and symbolism merits extensive comment. In her discussion of *gondang* and *adat*, Okazaki mentions that some elements of the traditional form and symbolism persist in *adat* feasts. She claims that "a tripartite structure frames the ceremonial procedure" (Okazaki 1994: 129). She observes that these elements keep appearing in contemporary *adat* feasts. The use of *gondang* and *tortor* to demonstrate kinship relationship is a central feature of *adat* feasts. *Gondang* musicians (*pargonsi*) support the ceremonial speeches. The giving of maxims is an important constituent of *adat* speeches. The ceremonial shawl (*ulos*) is a ceremonial gift exchanged among members of the *dalihan na tolu*. Gestures of worship as well as blessings always accompany the performance of *sipitu gondang* (a series of the seven *gondang* pieces). Portions of meat (*jambar*) are always given to every member of the *dalihan na tolu* in the same way. This is correct as far as those traditional forms and expressions are concerned. Nevertheless, my investigations suggest that there are still many other elements of traditional structures and expressions that are important, especially in the performance of *gondang* within *adat* feasts. These elements include the giving of meals to the musicians (*manggalang pargonsi*), the giving of betel nut to the musicians (*demban panjujuran*), the requirement that musicians re-offer the betel nut to the deities (*tongo-tonggo*) and that they perform the given series of seven *gondang* pieces (*gondang panjujuran*), and the rule that the feast-giving groups call for blessings at the beginning of the *gondang* performances (*mangalap tua ni gondang*). These elements are not thoroughly explored in Okazaki's thesis.

Some of Okazaki's assertions need to be questioned. Okazaki claims that only a few Toba Batak know the meaning of the ceremonial behavior and objects, especially the meaning behind the performance, and that therefore knowledge about the detail of the ritual is declining. If this were true, we would need to ask several questions. Why do the people perform *adat* feasts with *gondang* involving their relatives if they do not know the meaning and purpose of the performance? Why do they keep exchanging ceremonial gifts if they do not know the meaning behind this? My investigations suggest that it is because the people are aware of their *adat* obligation and the ensuing implications that they continue to perform *adat* ritual with *gondang* performance, as I will discuss.

There are a few contradictions in Okazaki's work that need to be thought through. Okazaki maintains that the "*gondang sabangunan* never varies. No instrument is added or omitted when it is used in [the] *pesta adat* 'adat feast,'" in so doing suggesting that there is a stable, authentic form of instrumentation. This is not true in all communities. My investigations show that the *gondang sabangunan* ensemble in the Parmalim community (a Toba Batak religious organization of Laguboti, Kabupaten Tapanuli Utara) employs the double headed drum (*odap*) in addition to the set of six drums (*taganing* and *gordang*) that is, it uses an instrument that is not used in *gondang sabangunan* ensembles employed in mainstream Christian Toba Batak society. Nevertheless, I do agree with Okazaki that the size of the *gondang* ensemble has changed with Western instruments frequently being added to it, and it is being performed in non-*adat* contexts.

Okazaki presupposes that the word 'gondang' derived either from the word 'gendang', the Malayan word for drum, or 'kendang', the Indonesian term for drum. Considering the similar articulation of the words, with only one vowel distinguishing them, her etymological assumption may be correct. However, she needs to go further than this to explain that 'gondang' does not simply mean 'gendang' in Toba Batak language. My fieldwork data suggests that the concept of *gondang* in the Toba Batak language is much broader than that of 'gendang' in Malay and Indonesian, or 'kendhang' in Javanese. Apparently, *gondang* musicians refer to every drum in the *gondang sabangunan* ensemble by a specific name, from the smallest to the largest *ting-ting*, *paidua ting-ting*, *painonga*, *paidua odap*, *odap-odap*, *gordang bolon*, and *odap* (Irwansyah 1990: 46). They are all drums, yet, to the best of my knowledge, musicians do not use the term 'gendang' to refer to these instruments. Thus, I will argue that the term 'gondang' does not simply denote a musical instrument.

Okazaki has made an invaluable contribution to the study of *gondang-tortor* tradition. Okazaki's work certainly has implication for research, for example, on the many performance aspects and contexts of the *gondang-tortor* tradition. Moreover, her finding on the multiplicity of meanings that *gondang* conveys is a starting point for further ethnomusicological investigation into the musical culture of the Toba Batak people.

This author's dissertation of 1998 entitled "Musical and Functional Change in the Gondang Sabangunan Tradition of the Protestant Toba Batak 1860's – 1990's with Particular Reference to 1980s – 1990s" focuses on the study of change in the use, functions, meanings, musical style, and performance dynamics of *gondang sabangunan* and its associated *tortor* dancing. In this study, the author intend to focus on the contemporary performance of *gondang sabangunan* and *tortor* as well as the change in the socio-religious functions of their performance within the context of *adat* and church feasts in the Christian Toba Batak society. Since the Catholic practices have already been studied by Okazaki, the author shall concentrate on practices among the Protestant Toba Batak community. Although it discusses *gondang* performance during pre-Christian times, it is done mainly for the sake of comparison with the 1980's and 1990's.

The study is based on an examination of field recordings, including the music of (i) pre-funeral ceremonies of people who have migrated from Samosir island to Medan, (ii) exhumation of bones ceremonies among Protestant families in Hutaraja and Medan, (iii) church anniversary feasts and church fund-raising festival among Toba Batak migrant congregations in Medan, and (iv) wedding ceremonies among Protestant families in Medan. The author also examined *gondang* music perform in a concert situation for purposes of pure entertainment. This includes *gondang* performance at the 1994 Youth Festival (*Gondang Naposo*) at Medan, the 1992 cultural festival at Parapat (*Pesta Danau Toba*), the 1989 anniversary of a political party, Golkar, at Medan, and the 1989 *Batak gondang* symphony orchestra (*Pagelaran Orkes Simfoni Gondang Batak*) at Jakarta. The author also examined *gondang* music in some commercial cassette recordings and on videos of *gondang* performances for the monthly television program 'Horas' from Jakarta private television.

Over all, the thesis asserts a few points merit mention here. First, change in the religious and political orientation of Toba Batak society in the period between the 1860's and the early 1950's resulted in a weakening of the hegemony of *adat*, which in turn resulted in changes of style and meaning in the performing arts. Second, since the 1980's the Catholic Toba Batak church has incorporated *gondang* into its liturgy. In contrast, the Protestant church refuses to do so, but allows its congregation to use it in *adat* ceremonies. Third, in the 1990s, Toba Batak individuals and social groups have adhered to a variety of religious belief. Attitudes towards the *gondang-tortor* tradition take at least four forms: (i) the thoroughly *adat*-oriented, (ii) the thoroughly Christian practice-oriented, (iii) the simultaneously *adat* and Christian practice-oriented, and (iv) then primarily entertainment oriented. Each group of adherents encourages a specific performance practice, style and interpretation of musical meaning, with each performance style based on a different interpretation of the dialectical relationship between *adat* and Christianity. The last but not least, *gondang-tortor* performances at *adat* feasts symbolize religious and cultural sentiments and social relationships; while performance at church feasts and concert situations serve as entertainment.

Conclusion

The scholarly investigation into the *gondang-tortor* traditional conducted by local and foreign scholars in the last fifteen years have been focused on various topics, including musical structures of *gondang*, playing techniques and learning process, socio-religious aspect of *gondang-tortor* performances, description of *gondang-tortor* performances performed in healing ceremonies and Parmalim's religious ceremonies, *adat* speech in *gondang* performances by member of different religious institutions, social stratification of *gondang* musicians, and *gondang* and *tortor* performances in relation to religious change. Despite these invaluable contributions to the study of *gondang-tortor* tradition, there are still vast areas of research into the *gondang-tortor* tradition that are still unexplored, including the use of *gondang sabangunan* and *tortor* in Parmalim religious ceremonies. A full account of the *gondang* tradition and its repertoire has still not been written. *Gondang* performance as a means of evoking spirits has not been investigated. *Gondang* performance in traditional healing ceremonies have not been thoroughly documented. The impact of *gondang* rhythmic structure on Toba Batak popular music still needs to be researched, as does *gondang* in pre-funeral ceremonies, the organology of *gondang* instruments and their tuning systems, the orally transmitted theory of *gondang* music and the process of teaching and learning *gondang*.

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