



**LOCALISATION AND GLOCALISATION OF THE 24 FESTIVE DRUMS
THROUGH PERSPECTIVES OF PERFORMATIVITY IN MUSIC**

By

YANG YUNXI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor Philosophy**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The 24 Festive Drums, a music performance originating from Malaysia, skilfully blends traditional Chinese cultural elements such as *jieling*, *shigu*, and calligraphy with drumming that incorporates the ancient 24 solar terms. This unique style has rapidly gained popularity and is now recognised as part of Malaysia's national intangible cultural heritage. While the genre has attracted international attention, academic discussions have yet to deeply explore its glocal-local performance dimensions. Many studies have focused on its role in team-building and cultural dissemination, but there is a notable gap in research concerning its performativity in music. Additionally, debates within Malaysia regarding the drums' localisation and claims of cultural ownership between Malaysia and China mirror broader identity transformations from Chinese to Malaysian. However, these discussions often fail to address how such identities are shaped by glocal influences.

This study examines the performativity of the 24 Festive Drums, exploring both musical and non-musical elements to understand how globalisation and localisation

influence this genre. It also considers the interpretation of glocalisation through these performances. Adopting an ethnographic approach, this ethnomusicological research includes fieldwork in Malaysia and China. Data are analysed through content analysis and micro-analysis to discern the interplay of local and glocal influences on this musical tradition.

The results show that the 24 Festive Drums bear the characteristic of Chineseness, reflected not only in its cultural background and performance style but also in the values and moral concepts inherited. Based on the discussion of glocalisation and localisation, it is found that this music performance is influenced differently in various social contexts, and practitioners need to adjust according to the local environment. Particularly in Malaysia, the identity of the drums is not singular but evolves with the social environment. Against the backdrop of glocalisation discussions, this research underscores the importance of approaching the glocalisation of the drums with a mindset that moves beyond a Sinocentric view. This perspective broadens the comprehension of Chinese culture to include glocal Chinese communities, showcasing the vibrant interaction between worldwide influences and local particularities. In summary, the 24 Festive Drums illustrates how Chinese culture retains Chineseness while adapting and integrating within a glocal context.

Keywords: 24 Festive Drums, Chinese music, Glocalisation, Localisation, Performativity in music.

SDG: GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**LOKALISASI DAN GLOKALISASI GENDANG 24 PERAYAAN MELALUI
PERSPEKTIF PERFORMATIVITI DALAM MUZIK**

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Gendang 24 Perayaan, sebuah pertunjukan muzikal yang berasal dari Malaysia, dengan mahirnya menggabungkan unsur-unsur budaya Cina tradisional seperti *jieling*, *shigu*, dan kaligrafi dengan permainan gendang yang merangkumi 24 istilah solar kuno. Gaya unik ini telah cepat mendapatkan populariti dan kini diakui sebagai sebahagian dari warisan budaya tak benda kebangsaan Malaysia. Walaupun genre ini telah menarik perhatian antarabangsa, perbincangan akademik masih belum mendalam mengenai dimensi persembahan glocal-lokalnya. Banyak kajian telah memfokuskan pada peranannya dalam pembinaan pasukan dan penyebaran budaya, tetapi terdapat kekurangan kajian mengenai performativiti dalam muzik. Selain itu, perdebatan di Malaysia mengenai lokalisasi gendang dan tuntutan kepemilikan budaya antara Malaysia dan China mencerminkan transformasi identiti yang lebih luas dari China ke Malaysia. Namun, perbincangan ini seringkali gagal untuk mengatasi bagaimana identiti tersebut dibentuk oleh pengaruh glocal.

Kajian ini meneliti performativiti Gendang 24 Perayaan , meneroka elemen muzikal dan bukan muzikal untuk memahami bagaimana glokalisasi dan lokalisasi mempengaruhi genre ini. Ia juga mempertimbangkan interpretasi glokalisasi melalui persembahan ini. Dengan mengambil pendekatan etnografi, penyelidikan etnomuzikologi ini termasuk kerja lapangan di Malaysia dan China. Data dianalisis melalui analisis kandungan dan mikro-analisis untuk mengenal pasti interaksi pengaruh lokal dan global terhadap tradisi muzikal ini.

Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa Gendang 24 Perayaan memiliki ciri-ciri Kecinaan, yang tidak hanya tercermin dalam latar belakang budaya dan gaya persembahan, tetapi juga dalam nilai dan konsep moral yang diwarisi. Berdasarkan perbincangan tentang glokalisasi dan lokalisasi, didapati bahawa persembahan muzik ini dipengaruhi secara berbeza dalam pelbagai konteks sosial, dan pengamal perlu menyesuaikan diri mengikut persekitaran tempatan. Khususnya di Malaysia, identiti gendang tidak tunggal tetapi berkembang bersama persekitaran sosial. Dalam konteks perbincangan glokalisasi, penyelidikan ini menekankan kepentingan pendekatan terhadap glokalisasi gendang dengan minda yang melampaui pandangan Sinocentrik. Perspektif ini memperluas pemahaman tentang budaya Cina untuk merangkumi komuniti Cina global, memperlihatkan interaksi yang dinamis antara pengaruh dunia dan kekhususan lokalalisasi. Secara kesimpulan, Gendang 24 Perayaan menggambarkan bagaimana budaya Cina mempertahankan Kecinaan sambil menyesuaikan dan mengintegrasikan dalam konteks global.

Kata kunci: Gendang 24 Perayaan, Muzik Cina, Glokalisasi, Lokalisasi, Performativiti dalam muzik,

SDG: MATLAMAT 11: Komuniti dan Bandar Yang Lestari.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

24 Festive Drums [二十四节令鼓], a form of musical performance that originating in Malaysia. This performance features 24 drums, each symbolising a specific solar term from the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar. Each drum is adorned with Chinese calligraphy representing its corresponding solar term. True to its name, it has become an inseparable part of Chinese festivities in Malaysia. During the early development of the 24 Festive Drums, most drum troupes¹ were established in Chinese schools and associations. Over time, the presence of the 24 Festive Drums has become evident in various cultural activities across Malaysia.

There are three distinctive ethnic elements involved in the creation of the drums: *jieling* [节令]², *shigu* [狮鼓] (literally lion drum), and calligraphy, where all elements are rooted in traditional Chinese culture. Despite featuring *shigu* identical to those used in Chinese lion dances, making it a strong Chinese cultural symbol, this performance has a relatively short history among the Chinese community in Malaysia. It involves intricate rhythmic patterns, combinations of body movements, flexible formations, and visual and aural integration. It is important to note that, in contrast to the longstanding

¹ The 24 Festive Drums feature two types of teams: traditional performance teams, generally referring to school drum teams, and professional teams such as Hands Percussion and Orang Orang Drum Theatre.

² *Jieling* includes the 24 solar terms and a series of cultural activities that coincide with them (Lin and Wang 2020).

drumming traditions of Eastern and Western cultures, this music genre is relatively new, having been established only 36 years ago as of 2024.

The 24 Festive Drums are inextricably linked to the culture of Chinese community in Malaysia, whose ancestors migrated from China centuries ago. The earliest evidence of Chinese migration to Malaysia dates back to the 15th century, with records indicating active Chinese merchants during the Malacca Sultanate (Yan 1991, 5). These migrants brought with them cultural customs that have been maintained to this day, including Chinese musical instruments, such as the *shigu*, *erhu* [二胡], and *guzheng* [古筝].

Over time, as the population grew in this land, there was an increased emphasis on the importance of culture and education. Consequently, the community established local community organisations, chambers of commerce, and Chinese Assembly Hall (Lim 1998). With these institutions in place, there was active promotion of Chinese performing arts, including *huayuetuan* [华乐团] (Tan Sooi Beng 2000), lion and dragon dances (Tan Sooi Beng 2007), *po-te-hi* [布袋戏] (Tan Sooi Beng 1984), and Teochew opera (Mi 2021). However, the 24 Festive Drums emerged as one of the latest developments in this cultural context.

Globalisation occurs when the mobility of people, goods, or cultures among countries and regions increases in pace and intensity. While there are different views on the starting point of globalisation, some believe it began with the Age of Exploration in 1492, a period that established a vast trade system across continents which include trans-Atlantic and ocean routes between Europe and East Asia (Coatsworth 2004, 38).

Others consider globalisation to have started with the earliest human migration activities as early as the 3rd millennium BC. (Grinin et al. 2013,10).

With its significant Chinese population, Malaysia serves as an example where its formation and development are closely linked to globalisation and migration from Mainland China, the India Subcontinent and the Malay Archipelago. Beginning in the early 15th century with the visits of Chinese merchants and envoys to Malacca, and especially following the British occupation of Penang in 1786, Chinese migration accelerated and can be categorised into three phases: the merchant phase, the labour migration phase, and women's migration phase (Zhong 1998, 200-209). These migration activities reflect the characteristics of population movement during globalisation over several centuries.

Migration, localisation, and cultural exchange are interconnected and dynamic processes. Migrants impact the local environments of their settlement cities and are, in turn, influenced by these local settings (Tan Chee-Beng 2011, 16). They foster interpersonal connections and cultural exchanges. This interaction influences the urban environment where they settle and shapes their integration process (Glick Schiller, Nina, and Ayse Çaglar 2008, 15). In context globalisation involves integrating global processes into local contexts, shaping and reshaping localities in unique ways.

The Chinese community in Malaysia is a prime example of this dynamic process. Here, Chinese settlers intermarried with Malays, creating a unique cultural hybrid. Descents, known as "peranakan Chinese" or Baba-Nyonya. Although they adopted a Malay

lifestyle, these migrants typically did not convert to Islam³, they preferred to maintain ancestral worship practices and ensured the continuation and popularity of the Chinese patrilineal kinship system and religious culture (Debernardi 2004, 22). While retaining Chinese identity, the Baba-Nyonya exhibit a blend of localisation and globalisation.

There are two contrasting perspectives on the impact of globalisation on cultural diversity. On one side, some commentators, viewing globalisation as a form of liberalisation or Westernisation, argue that it leads to cultural synchronisation, where global culture becomes homogenised, predominantly influenced by Western patterns, particularly American consumerism, media, and the English language (Scholte 2005; Levitt 1983). This view suggests that globalisation diminishes cultural diversity and imposes a uniform culture worldwide. Additionally, globalisation is seen as a catalyst for new forms of identity and community that are not strictly tied to geographic territories but are based on shared interests or characteristics such as class, gender, or religion. Conversely, another set of scholars emphasises that globalisation can coexist with, or even enhance, cultural diversity. They argue that global influences are often localised in a process termed “glocalisation” (Robertson 2012; Scholte 2005), where global elements are adapted to fit local contexts, thus preserving or even fostering local cultures and identities. Glocalisation, containing the connotation of globalisation and localisation, emphasises the balance between global uniformity and the preservation of local diversity. However, with localisation as an integral component, glocalisation goes beyond mere adaptation to local markets. It places a stronger emphasis on

³ Article 160 defines a “Malay” as a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay customs. Additionally, Article 160 encompasses legal definitions, stating that ‘law’ includes written law, common law to the extent it operates with the force of law in the Federation, and any custom or usage with the force of law in the Federation. It should be noted that Islamic law is not explicitly mentioned in this definition (Lee HP 2017, 133).

achieving a dynamic equilibrium between global forces and local characteristics.

The impact of glocalisation, with the process of localisation playing a far more important role at most times, is not confined to culture and identity; it is also evident in musical performances. Traditional musicology, which primarily focuses on scores, delves deep into musical works' structure and theoretical analysis. In contrast, ethnomusicology, adopting an anthropological perspective, emphasises the practices and behaviours within specific cultural contexts. Both fields aim to understand sound production, organisation, and significance in distinct historical or cultural settings (Madrid 2009). However, the concept of performativity in music extends the scope of study beyond conventional framework in musicology or studies in performing arts. It includes aspects such as identity construction, expressive use of language, political activities, and body language performance in everyday life (Chung 2019). Indeed, the intersection between performativity in music and the glocal–local nexus is intricate and multifaceted.

Music embodies a dual nature, serving both as a universal form of expression and as a medium deeply rooted in specific cultural and social contexts (Kartomi 2014, 190) makes it an ideal lens through which to examine the dynamics of globalisation and localisation. In Malaysia, this phenomenon can be observed in Chinese musical performances, especially in *huayuetuan*, which at time integrate Malay repertoire into Chinese instrumental timbre. For example, “*Keindahan Kampung*” (Liou 2019, 103). This represents a localisation process for *huayuetuan*. Despite primarily using instruments, scores, and materials imported from China, certain local composers are increasingly infusing Malay musical elements to create compositions with a unique local essence (Liou 2019, 93). The conceptual framework of performativity in music

provides researchers with a unique perspective, facilitating a more comprehensive comprehension of the uniqueness of Chinese musical performances in Malaysia and their position and role in glocal and local cultural contexts.

In Malaysia, the promotion of Chinese culture has faced many challenges. The implementing the National Cultural Policy in 1971 imposed restrictions on the development of Chinese culture, leading to resistance by the Chinese community to protect their rights (Onn 2009, 3). In response, a performance known the 24 Festive Drums was born in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, in 1988. This musical performance quickly gained popularity in Malaysia and was recognised at the national level as an intangible cultural heritage in 2009. Over time, the drums have seen significant development globally, particularly in China, where numerous local drum troupes have been established. This performance has been showcased in official events, receiving widespread publicity and coverage in China. Notably, while the performance is deeply rooted in fundamental elements of Chinese culture, its origin in Malaysia has led to diverse interpretation of this musical performance.

1.2 Problem statement

The 24 Festive Drums is regarded as musical performance but yet to be perceived as an object of performativity in music. Studies on the 24 Festive Drums as partial or incomplete (Chan 2001, 2006; Lee 2015; Onn 2011). Previous research has provided foundational insights into the drums. For example, Chan (2001), in her master's thesis, presented the relationship between solar terms, music, and body movements. In 2006, she published a paper reporting on the regulations and stipulations of school 24 Festive Drums troupes. Subsequent research, such as the works of Lee (2015) and Onn (2011),

delved into aspects ranging from team-building training to the genesis of the drums. Tey (2018) expanded on the drums' dissemination within Malaysia and their global presence. Leong (2013), Wong (2017), Yew (2020), and Leow (2022) mainly discussed the current development status and heritage of the drums in Malaysia in their papers. Matusky and Tan (2017) briefly described its background, including the history of development, instruments, music, and rhythms. Few have studied this performance through the perspective of performativity in music. Only Siu (2020), in her doctoral dissertation, mentioned related content on performativity using a Pan-Asian performance theory. Research on performativity treats music as a performance, emphasising the active role of musical behaviour in shaping social realities and incorporating a broader range of cultural and social influences (Madrid 2009). This concept is still rarely applied or emphasised in the study of the 24 Festive Drums, or even in any Chinese music studies.

The narratives of the 24 Festive Drums in Malaysia and other regions are incoherent, polarising, and even arguable. This issue is particularly evident regarding the question of centrality. This transformation has sparked diverse opinions on its localisation process. Leong (2013) champions the idea of localisation as a pivotal trajectory for the drum's development in Malaysia, suggesting it facilitates national acknowledgment and integration. Wang (2020) illustrates how the drums incorporate local Malaysian artistic elements, thereby embedding a distinctly local music style within the performance. The advent of professional drum troupes has further nuanced this localisation discourse. Siu (2020) delineates how these troupes, through the integration of Malaysian local art forms, have navigated their path toward localisation. However, Leow (2022) highlights that researchers should not overlook the uniqueness of Chinese

culture in Malaysia. Leow pointed out that the term localisation might overlook the uniqueness of Chinese in Malaysia. Onn (2011) points out that the establishment of drum troupes in various countries overseas is a result of years of cultural export by the Chinese in Malaysia. These divergent perspectives underscore a tension between global and local, while overlooking the fluidity of Chinese culture. This divergence of perspectives between global and local considerations and the flow of Chinese culture is a point worth deep contemplation. Another underestimated gaze on the subject matter is the dynamics between the concept of glocalisation and the volatile process localisation of the drums in different regions of the world. Furthermore, these views also hint at the question of cultural ownership of 24 Festive Drums, which is practiced in both Malaysia and China nowadays.

The complexity of the 24 Festive Drums in its cultural meaning and identity representation is evident. In the past, researchers have focused on its role as a symbol of Chinese identity within the Malaysian context. Chan (2006) highlighted the crucial role of cultural awareness in maintaining the Chinese community's roots, traditions, and identity. Onn (2011) delved deeper into the drumming's link with the cultural revival movement among Malaysian Chinese. The emergence of professional drum ensembles marked a shift in the narrative surrounding the 24 Festive Drums, broadening the scope of identity considerations. In 2018, Chan conceptualised the identity of cosmopolitan Malaysians among members of the Hands Percussion. Similarly, Nithyanandan (2018) interpreted the group's representation as encompassing a broader Malaysian identity beyond just the Chinese community. Siu (2020) observed a shift in the drummers' identity from Chinese-only to cosmopolitan Malaysian. Leow (2022) investigated the connection of this performing art with Malaysian identity. These studies reveal the diverse identities associated with the 24

Festive Drums, spanning arguable grounds on Malaysian Chinese, Malaysians, and cosmopolitanism. However, no argument has completely encapsulated the intricate and diverse nature of the drums, particularly within a highly politicised context. The narrative of local-global centrality in the 24 Festive Drums further complicates the identity representation of the music genre, resulting in the sentimental associations of the drums with Chinese culture as well as nationalism in Malaysia and China.

Therefore, research on the 24 Festive Drums remains limited compared to other Chinese performing arts, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the music genre. Despite various analytical perspectives applied to the performance, a comprehensive exploration of how glocalisation and localisation interact and influence its change is still lacking. Moreover, it has been observed that the subject is deeply intertwined with identity issues, particularly reflecting the evolving identity among the Chinese in Malaysia. This study aims to delve into the phenomenon of glocalisation and the transformation of Chinese identity within the context of the drums. Applying the conceptual framework of performativity in music, it seeks to unravel these complex meanings as they unfold uniquely in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

Based on the discussion above, the following research questions are proposed in this study:

1. What is the performativity in music of 24 Festive Drums in terms of musical and non-musical elements?
2. How does the interplay between globalisation and localisation affect the transmission of the 24 Festive Drums?

3. How can localisation and glocalisation, amid various arguments in local and global issues, be interpreted through the performativity in music of the 24 Festive Drums?

The following are research objectives:

1. To explore and analyse the musical and non-musical elements through the performativity in music of 24 Festive Drums.
2. To examine the ideas that affect the transmission of the 24 Festive Drums in terms of local and global aspects.
3. To interpret localisation and glocalisation through the performativity in music of the 24 Festive Drums.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The field contributes to several areas of study, including cultural studies, ethnomusicology, glocalisation studies, performativity, Chinese studies, and interdisciplinary studies. Through the study of 24 Festive Drums, it enriches people's understanding of how this specific cultural practice interacts with and expresses itself within various global contexts.

The study's examination of the 24 Festive Drums through the lens of performativity in music underscores the multifaceted nature of this art form. It is not merely an auditory or visual spectacle but a comprehensive performance composite that intertwines musicality, dance, and broader cultural and societal contexts. By focusing on both the musical and non-musical elements—the rhythms, body movements, cultural symbolism, and societal impacts—the study delves into the intricate ways the drums construct and express a unique identity. This research enriches people's understanding of the drums, showcasing them as a dynamic embodiment of cultural interplay and exchange.

The study unveils the bidirectional fluidity of Chinese culture in the process of globalisation, shedding light on the dynamic interactions between global and local contexts. It exemplifies how a cultural artefact can maintain its intrinsic characteristics while simultaneously adapting to and integrating with different cultural contexts. This phenomenon illustrates the flexibility and adaptability of Chinese culture and enhances researchers' comprehension of how global influences and local traditions intermingle, particularly in musical performance.

The 24 Festive Drums showcase a rich tapestry of Chineseness through their cultural origins and performance aesthetics. However, they also transcend these boundaries, adopting global and local nuances across diverse social contexts. Through this research, people gain valuable insights into how Chinese culture not only influences but is also influenced by the various locales it touches, reflecting a complex interplay of cultural transmission and adaptation. This analysis enriches people's understanding of cultural fluidity and highlights the role of the 24 Festive Drums in symbolising the multifaceted identity of the Chinese in Malaysia.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The deliberate decision not to specify a region in the title, given the emphasis on glocalisation and cultural fluidity, underscores a broader, more inclusive perspective on the research subject. Even though the title eschews regional specificity, the research itself, grounded in an ethnographic approach, requires a focused examination of specific locales to provide depth and context to the study. Hence, this research has chosen two specifically—Malaysia and China—for analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of glocalisation.

The choice of Malaysia as the primary fieldwork site is apt, given its status as the birthplace of the 24 Festive Drums. The fieldwork specifically targets the Klang Valley, Penang, and Johor Bahru regions, where drum troupes are notably more active compared to those in East Malaysia. Selecting China as a secondary research site represents a strategic decision, given the active presence of similar drum troupes there, which is crucial for understanding the origins and traditional aspects of the 24 Festive Drums. The city of Quanzhou in Fujian Province has been chosen for its historical significance; it is where the first drum troupe of 24 Festive Drums was founded in China and remains prominently active. In contrast, drum troupes in other cities were established more recently and are less active. This geographical focus facilitates a detailed examination of the cultural interplay and development of the 24 Festive Drums within these contexts. Research conducted in China provides crucial supporting material to deepen people's understanding of the key concept of glocalisation.

It is important to note that this study does not include drum troupes from other countries. Consequently, while the research provides in-depth insights into the development and dissemination of the 24 Festive Drums in Malaysia and China, it does not claim to provide a comprehensive global overview of all drum troupes worldwide. The findings are specific to Malaysia and China's cultural and historical landscapes and should be understood within these regional contexts. In the study, research activities were conducted over the past five years. However, the videos used for research span a broader range, covering from the earliest in 2009 to the most recent in 2023.

This study specifically concentrates on the drummers, the performances, and the physical movements. It excludes considerations of the audience's perspective and any derivative creative works that have emerged from this tradition. Additionally, given the extensive repertoire of the 24 Festive Drums, this research strategically selects three representative pieces for in-depth analysis to facilitate a deeper understanding of the concept of glocalisation.

1.6 Terminology

1.6.1 Performativity in music

Performativity in music refers to all elements that can be described or analysed about a performer. It also involves the interaction, technique, and rhythms among group members. It is important to recognise that performativity in music includes not only the performance itself but also the numerous factors that contribute to its success, including sound and lighting engineers, costume designers, and organisers (Kartomi 2014, 189–190). When studying performativity in music, researchers must explore what it means to be embodied while also illuminating the sociocultural context in which the performance takes place (Davidson 2014, 179). Hence, performativity in music encompasses the relationship between music and musicians, as well as intricate connections it shares with culture and society.

1.6.2 24 Festive Drums

The term “24 Festive Drums” is a word-by-word literal translation of Chinese *pinyin* because, in academic writing, scholars have not given it an accurate name. Upon

reviewing various documents, readers can easily find that although different scholars gave it different names, the translations corresponded to their meaning in Chinese. Common names include: 24 Seasons Drums (Lee et al. 2015; Nithyanandan 2015; Matuky and Tan 2017; Tee and Kuan, 2021); 24 Jie Ling Gu (*Jielinggu*) (Chan 2001; Chow 2008; Lee Soo Foon 2019; Matondang 2016; Leow 2022); 24 Jie Ling Gu (24 Seasons Drums) (Chan 2006); 24 Jie Ling Gu (24 Festive Drums) (Chan 2013; Chan 2018; Chan 2022); 3. Twenty-four Festive Drums (Ang 2007; Tey 2018; Gee 2013); 4. 24 Festive Drums (Siu 2022). “24 Festive Drums” was chosen for this study since it represents different meanings based on the Chinese characters *jie* and *ling*, which are consistent with the cultural significance of the music genre.

1.6.3 *Jieqi* and *Jieling*

Jieqi [节气] is a traditional Chinese system that divides the year into 24 solar terms. It is an important component of the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar, which guides agricultural activities and reflects the changing of seasons. Each *jieqi* represents specific weather patterns, agricultural tasks, and natural phenomena corresponding to particular times of the year (Lin and Wang 2020).

Jieling [节令], in Chinese culture, generally signifies the seasonal norms or regulations historically adhered to in accordance with seasonal changes. These guidelines are typically associated with agricultural activities, traditional festivals, and customs that align with natural rhythms and cycles throughout the year. This concept bears a close relationship to *jieqi* (Lin and Wang 2020).

1.6.4 Chinese

Chinese in Malaysia [马来西亚华人 or 马华] refers to the ethnic Chinese population residing in Malaysia. This group is part of the larger Chinese diaspora and is distinguished by its unique historical, cultural, and social characteristics within the Malaysian context. The term encompasses the diverse experiences, traditions, and contributions of the Chinese community in Malaysia, highlighting their role in the country's cultural and economic landscape (Tan Chee-Beng 2005).

Malaysia Chinese refers to the ethnic Chinese population in Malaysia, a group distinguished by a distinctive amalgamation of Chinese and Malaysian identities. It emphasises the ethnic Chinese as part of the Malaysian national identity, suggesting that while they are ethnically Chinese, they are also Malaysian. This sets them apart from Chinese communities in other countries, such as Indonesia, Thailand, or China. Their unique identity is moulded by various factors: the diverse experiences of living across different regions of Malaysia, their integration into the broader Malaysian national culture, and their interactions with the country's other ethnic groups (Tan Chee-Beng 1997; Tan Chee-Beng 2000).

Chinese Malaysians similarly highlight the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia but place a slight emphasis on their Malaysian context. They identify simultaneously as *Huaren* and Malaysian, embodying a multi-layered and multifaceted identity shaped by their regional and national experiences of indigenisation in Malaysia. While they are part of the broader Chinese ethnic group and are not geographically confined, their specific experiences within Malaysia distinguish them from Chinese individuals of other

nationalities. Thus, the term typically refers to this Malaysia-bound identity (Tan Chee-Beng 1997; Tan Chee-Beng 2000).

1.7 Organisation of Thesis

The main body of this dissertation comprises six chapters. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive analysis of the 24 Festive Drums, exploring their cultural and social backgrounds in Malaya and Malaysia, examining terminological distinctions, and detailing their development, global promotion, and the influence of globalisation and localisation on this music genre. Chapter Three outlines the methodology, including the research design, data type, and data collection procedure. Chapter Four examines the performativity in the music of the 24 Festive Drums, analysing both musical and non-musical elements such as instrumentation, rhythm, body movement, and cultural expression, focusing on three key repertoires to elucidate their artistic and cultural meaning within a global context. Chapter Five presents the findings and discussion of the study, exploring the glocalisation of the 24 Festive Drums through performativity in music and providing an in-depth analysis of the data obtained from extensive interviews. Chapter Six summarises the conclusions and findings of the study.

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